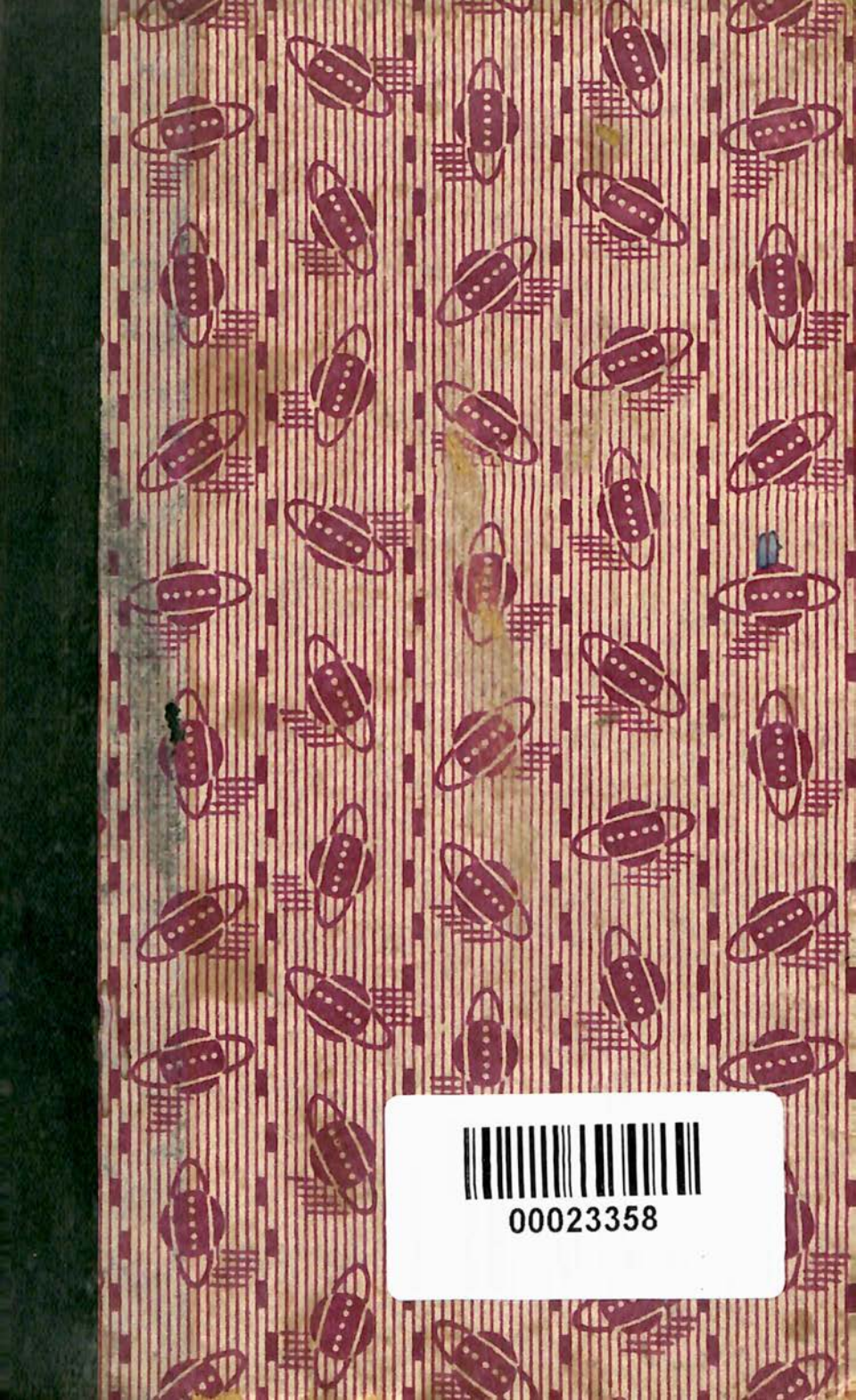
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THE FAMILY PEN.

MEMORIALS, BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY,

OF THE

TAYLOR FAMILY,

OF ONGAR.

EDITED BY

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INCUMBENT OF ST. MATTHIAS, BETHNAL GREEN;

AUTHOR OF "WORDS AND PLACES," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE last completed effort of my Father's pen was a series of "Personal Recollections," which appeared from time to time in *Good Words*, during the year 1864. One of these papers bears the title which has been chosen for the following pages, the FAMILY PEN. It contains an account of the literary activity of three successive generations of the author's family. This Essay holds the first place in these volumes.

A short time before the "Personal Recollections" were written, my Father had employed his leisure hours in revising, enlarging, and re-arranging one of his earliest works, the Life of his sister, Jane Taylor, which first appeared in the year 1825, soon after her death. This revised Memoir, which was left in readiness for publication, seemed to form an appropriate supplement to the Essay which is reprinted from *Good Words*.

The juxtaposition of the two works, one almost the first, the other the last performance of the veteran author, shows in a striking manner the changes which the interval of forty years had wrought, not only in his literary style, but in his whole tone of thought.

The volume is completed by a short sketch of my Father's life and writings, for which I am myself responsible. I trust this may not supersede a more extended Memoir which is in preparation.

The Second Volume of the FAMILY PEN contains a selection from the writings of Jane Taylor; of her brother, Jefferys Taylor; of her sister, Mrs. Gilbert; and of other members of her family. Some of these pieces are little known, several have been long out of print, and one—a poem by Mrs. Gilbert—now appears for the first time. The earlier productions of Jefferys Taylor, which are almost unknown to the present generation of readers, require, I believe, only to be brought forward, in order to obtain a greater appreciation than they have as yet received.

I. T.

LONDON, *June* 1867.

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THE FAMILY PEN.

BY THE LATE ISAAC TAYLOR.

A PEN which has been moist with ink—ink destined for the eye of the compositor—has been passing from hand to hand, within the circuit of a family—it is now more than eighty years; and it is still in course of consignment to younger hands of the same stock.

A task, not of the easiest sort, it must be, to bring into view some personal incidents of this transmission in a manner that shall be characteristic, and at every point true to facts, and yet shall not trespass upon good taste or wound the feelings of those concerned, or come under rebuke on the ground of egotism, or of an overweening estimate of literary doings. I am far from being confident in my ability to keep to a mid-channel while steering in and out among so many perils. In accordance with a usage that was not quite discontinued in the eighteenth century, but was rife in the seventeenth, I might incline here to prefix a supplicatory dedication —"To the courteous reader," or "To the kind reader;"

and to ask a favourable hearing for a few pages from any who are willing to put a candid construction upon whatever may seem to need indulgence.

It must have been some time between 1768 and '70, that a youth, equally robust in body and in mind, and resolute in his thirst of knowledge, found himself in the midst of books—shelves upon shelves, in a shop in High Holborn. He plunged into the intellectual flood with the eagerness and the confidence of one who feels and knows that he shall swim—if only he may be free to strike the waves manfully. This youth, Charles Taylor, the son of an eminent engraver, had received, along with his brother Isaac, as much school learning as might then be had at a grammar-school in the country. This school, at Brentwood, Essex, was one of those, the doings of which were so mercilessly turned inside out by Lord Brougham, in the course of the inquiries instituted for that purpose in 1818, and afterwards in 1837. Whether the grievous delinquencies of the Brentwood Grammar School had reached the pitch which they afterwards attained, is not known; probably not so, for the two boys, Charles and Isaac, left it not wholly ignorant of Latin, nor perhaps of Greek. At a school in the City these acquisitions had been carried a few steps further upon the Gradus ad Parnassum. But whatever this schooling might have been worth, either in the country or in town, it sufficed in the instance of a youth so ardent, and so firm-nerved, as was Charles Taylor, to

give him easy access to ancient literature, and to the folios of modern commentators, which were then mostly in the Latin language. This introductory learning included Hebrew, and more or less of rabbinical and oriental scholarship, as well as two or three modern languages: moreover, as the son of an artist, and himself an artist by profession, at least, he had acquainted himself with numismatic lore, and with antiquarian art generally. These acquirements—*incidental* to book learning, and very rarely combined with it, greatly promoted the labours of his after life on the field of biblical illustration, and were enough to entitle Charles Taylor to his well-earned repute, as—the *Artist-Scholar*. With the marbles in the collection of the Duke of Richmond, Charles Taylor made himself well acquainted; and his twenty-first year, which he spent in Paris, was industriously employed among the treasures of the King's library. A new influx of miscellaneous learning came upon him at a later time, when the books of the "London Library," afterwards transferred to the building in Finsbury, were committed to his care as librarian, at his house in Hatton Garden, where they remained during several years.

It must have been at sundry times, during these years, and while the house in Hatton Garden, No. 108, was crammed with books—up-stairs, down-stairs, and in the hall and passages—that in my visits to the family, I saw my learned uncle; and not very seldom, when charged

with some message from home, I was admitted into his study. Alas that photography was not practised fifty years ago! The man—his deshabille, and his surroundings, would indeed have furnished a *carte de visite* not of the most ordinary sort. The scene! the tables—the library counters—the cheffoniers—the shelves and the floor (who shall say if the floor had a carpet?), all heaped with books:—books of all sizes and sorts:—books open, one upon another—books with a handful of leaves doubled in to keep the place—books in piles, that had slid down from chairs or stools, and had rested unmoved until a deep deposit of dust had got a lodgment upon them! Quires of proof sheets and revises—here and there, folded and unfolded. On the table usually occupied by the writer there was just room for an inkstand, and for a folded sheet of demy or foolscap. But the genius of this chaos!—he was no pale, sallow, nervous, midnight-lamp-looking recluse, or ghost. Not at all so, but a man—then just past mid-life—powerful in bony and muscular framework—singularly hirsute—well limbed, well filled out, erect in walk, prominent and aquiline in feature—teeming, as one should say, with repressed energy: always equal to more work than he had actually in hand: never wearied or wasted in labour; but impatient to be "at it again." Work was his play: rest was his work:—moments of intermission cost him an effort: hours of labour none;—and he made the effort duly when he came forth to take his seat at the

family table. At the family table my learned uncle was urbane; perhaps he would be jocose; but he never discoursed of the matters wherewith his brain was then teeming. His table talk was an instance in illustration of Talleyrand's reply to an impertinent physician who had tried to lead him into state affairs—"Sir, I never talk of things that I understand." It might seem perhaps as if the chief person at the tea-table was not used to give those around him credit for as much intelligence as they actually possessed: nevertheless they did not impute to him anything like arrogance; certainly not pomposity or affectation. His deportment was quite of another sort—it was not supercilious; but it appeared to have been framed upon the hypothesis of unmeasured spaces intervening between the study-table and the tea-table.

Although fixedly taciturn as to his proper literary engagements—unless it might be with the few who were learned in his own line—my uncle ever kept himself awake towards all subjects, literary, or scientific, or political, or statistical, that might come in his way. Nothing in philosophy, or in the arts, found him unprepared to bring it to its place in his storehouse of knowledge. As to books, he seemed to have them, chapter and page, at his command. Seldom did he fail to reach, in a moment, the volume, or to find the page, where he should find what he had occasion to refer to. There is a sort of duplex memory which achieves wonders with those

who possess it in a high degree. The first half of this double faculty takes to itself the place and the position of passages, in books, which have once been read. The second half is less mechanical, and is more intellectual—it is the recollection by *analogy*, or by the relation of matters. By aid of this endowment the stores of a library become available on any given subject. Charles Taylor's memory, in details, even in branches of study far removed from his own walk, was of the sort that must seem marvellous to any who are not gifted in the same manner.

But as to these endowments, and these various acquirements and this constitutional force, had they been devoted to any worthy purpose? It must be granted that all gifts were well employed, and that the unabated labours of almost fifty years had been concentred upon a great task, ably achieved. And this work of a life was crowned with much success. Charles Taylor must have been in his seventeenth year when, as above said, he came into command of a bookseller's stock of second-hand books. Upon the shelves in this shop there was a copy of Calmet's "Dictionnaire Historique et Critique de la Bible." It was precisely the book to rivet the attention of a youth of this order. At a very early time after becoming acquainted with it, and no doubt with the other voluminous writings of the learned Benedictine, he formed the resolve to bring out the Dictionary in English, appending to it the gleanings of his own

studies. To the due performance of this task he thenceforward devoted all the hours he could command through a track of about fifteen years, until he believed himself to be prepared for submitting a sample of the work to the judgment of the learned public—or rather of the very few who then ruled the learned world in the department of biblical literature.

At that time, and indeed until a much later time, works of this class had rarely appeared in England; and in the field of oriental usages, and of pictorial antiquarianism, very little had been done. Harmer's "Observations" was almost the only work of the same class. The fragmentary essays which accompanied the Parts of the Dictionary challenged attention as adventures upon new ground. Those were not the days of "Cyclopædias of Biblical Literature," nor of "Dictionaries of the Bible," nor of "Bible Dictionaries Illustrated;" nor of other such-like worthy endeavours to popularise biblical learning. The English translation of Calmet's Dictionary, with the Fragments and the Plates, has been the parent of a numerous family—in foolscap folio, and in Imperial, and in extra demy; nor has it been always that the offspring has yielded the dues of affection, or even of common justice, to their ancestor.* But the

* I have occasion here to keep in mind the rule—*de mortuis nil, nisi bonum*—and therefore must repress the impulse to assert my uncle's merits, so unfairly and ungenerously called in question by the late John Kitto. How would his own ill-digested work fare if dealt with in the same fashion?

"learned world" of that time was not slow to perceive, or to acknowledge, the merits of these "Parts"—the Dictionary—the Fragments, and the Plates. The editor (translator, commentator, and illustrator) received praise, and abundant encouragement to go on. Five volumes in quarto appeared in due course, and they were speedily reprinted. In the year in which Mr. Taylor's death occurred, a fifth edition of these quartos was carried through the press.

But who was the editor of Calmet—who was this *sole* and unassisted builder of what has been spoken of as "a stupendous monument of literary industry?" In *these* times "spirited publishers," who speculate in Cyclopædias, take care to enlist the *élite* of universities, at home and abroad, in their service; and no doubt they do well—or intend well, in taking this course; but here was a Samson, alone, who, with his brawny arms clutching the pillars of the palace of learning, did what he had purposed to do. Who then was he? It was nobody that had ever been known at Oxford or at Cambridge, or even at Edinburgh or Dublin. Call then at the house where the parts are published—108, Hatton Garden—and put the question. On the door-posts, either side, there is "C. Taylor, Engraver." Go in and ask for the editor of Calmet. You will never find him; or not *there*. Mr. C. Taylor, Engraver, may be spoken to, if you have any proper reason for asking him to come down into the lobby; but you will learn nothing

from *him* about this invisible editor. His answer to this interruption would be a look of annoyance, impatience perhaps; but no clearing up of the mystery. You are as likely to get an answer from the colossal Memnon in the British Museum. To the end of his days Charles Taylor refused to acknowledge himself as anything more than an artist—an engraver, or at least he would not be addressed as the editor of Calmet, or as the author of the Fragments. The few men of antiquarian erudition with whom, at times, he conversed, could not fail to divine the secret; but at least he would give them no right to report it from his lips.

I might err in attempting to penetrate the motives of this concealment. It might seem an incoherence thus to persist in the anonymous, year after year, for half a century; but I am sure it was no real incoherence in the mind of this accomplished man; yet unless one had seen him at home, and in his study, one should not get into the secret. There are reasons of an obvious and ordinary sort that might be named as probable, such as these—there would be reasons of policy, prudential reasons, and reasons of feeling. Mr. Taylor, although to the end of his days he was a Nonconformist, and a constant attendant at the old meeting-house in Fetter Lane, was, by temperament, and by the tendencies of his studies, decisively conservative; or, in the style of that time, he was a thorough-going Tory. It is not unlikely that what he had seen and foreseen in France, of the

coming thunder-storm of the Revolution, strongly took effect upon his opinions, when the thunder and the lightning actually came on to frighten all Europe. The Revolution hardened, in their Toryism, all who, like Edmund Burke, had been prepared to look at it in that light. Nobody more bold or free than he in his range of thought, on critical ground; nevertheless in personal demeanour, in conventional observances, and in the punctilious rendering of titles of honour where due, he never appeared at fault. It is easy to imagine then what were probably the feelings of a man of this disposition, in bringing before the public a voluminous work, implying very extensive reading, and a measure of scholarship that was not the most common. An indictment against such a one as he was, would contain several counts:—*first count*, a layman; *second count*, a Nonconformist; *third count*, a member of no university. A man labouring under these several conditions of disadvantage would feel—in proportion to his individual conservatism he would feel it—that, in coming abroad he must crouch under the shield of the anonymous. So was it, in fact, that the engraver ventured into print, nobody knowing who he might be.

After enjoying for several years the shade and shelter of this shield—great and manifold as are the benefits which this shield affords—Mr. Taylor would be reluctant to relinquish them. Literary ambition—or *ambition*, of any sort, certainly was not his ruling passion. Gladly he

would allow the ambitious, the pretentious, the noisy, to go by him and pass on to the front. For himself, he asked only *to be let alone;* and to be allowed to go on with his work—unknown, if so it might be. But there was yet something more in this life-long adherence to concealment. A supreme devotion to the task he had undertaken, and to which he had given the best years of his life—from eighteen to seventy (near it), ruled him, in an absolute manner. He thought highly of the importance of these, his chosen expository labours. He had confidence in his ability to prosecute them to some advantage. His ardour and industry had been recruited from time to time by the plaudits of biblical scholars, English and foreign, and by the proffered patronage of Church dignitaries. Content, thus far, and assured that he was not spending his strength to no purpose, he went on:—his study, and his books, and *his work*, were enough for him; and he cared very little for literary notoriety.

An instance very dissimilar in its circumstances, and in its visible proportions, but yet in harmony with it as to principle, was at hand, within the same family—or I should say, in the family of Charles Taylor's brother, Isaac. But now may I presume that many of my readers, who perhaps have known nothing of the five quartos of this Bible Dictionary, may care to hear something of the young persons, who, sixty years ago, put forth Original Poems, Hymns for Infant Minds, and

some similar books:—not indeed in folio, or in quarto, or even in 8vo? . I have ventured to say that *a principle* connects the above-mentioned five quartos, edited by the uncle, with the now-mentioned 24mos put forth by his two nieces. I think I shall make this relationship intelligible. The great pyramid of all that is printed might be sorted into several smaller pyramids, on several grounds of distinction; but there is one that has a real difference as its reason—there is a literature which is *literary* properly; it possesses no very serious intention:—it courts, and it wins, favour, in various degrees, according, or not according, to its intrinsic merits:—it reaps its reward—or perhaps no reward—in a commercial sense.—A small portion of this printed mass survives its hour, and takes a place among the classics of the language: it reprints through several decades of time. Thus far all is clear. But there is a literature which has had its origin in motives that are wholly of another order. By a solecism, or an allowable ambiguity, it receives its designation as *literature:* yet it is *unliterary literature.* It did not spring either from literary ambition, or from calculations of gain. The producers of books of this class—*books*, whether they be great or small—had been incited by no eagerness to be known as authors: perhaps they shrank from notoriety, and would most gladly have remained under the screen of anonymous authorship to the end of their course. If the due recompense of their labours did reach them

at last, this material remuneration never took the foremost place in their regards. They wrote, what they wrote, with an *intention*, and *for a purpose* that was ever prominent in the estimate they formed of their own successes or failures. Fame or no fame—income or no income, these writers asked themselves, or others about them, if they had written to good purpose. If an affirmative answer to *this* question could be given in at the bar of conscience, substantial comfort would be thence derived—spite of discomforts, many.

On this ground it is likely, and so it will appear in fact, that books, great and small—publications the most dissimilar in bulk, in quality, in purpose, in pretension—will be brought together: disproportion and unlikeness will not be a reason sufficient for dissociating those products of the Press which are found to be in harmony, as to the inner reason or the true impulse which has brought them into being. Thus it is therefore that I find a connecting thread, running on with the family pen, as it was held by the uncle, and as it has been held and used by his two nieces. A purpose, better and higher in its aim than literary ambition, or than pecuniary advantage, did rule, so I believe, in the one instance; and that it ruled in the other instance, I well and intimately know. Conversations and consultations, turning upon this very point of the comparative value of the motives which are wont to take effect within the precincts of literature, I perfectly well remember. Should it be literary reputation

or fame; or pecuniary advantage, and remuneration for work done; or should it be the higher and the better motive, namely, *usefulness* in the best sense? Of Mrs. Gilbert, my surviving sister, in the firm of "Ann and Jane," I am not free to speak; but I need be under no restraint in giving evidence as to what were the motives of my sister Jane in presenting herself, even in the humblest guise, before the public as a literary person. Her constitutional diffidence, and her tendency to shrink from notice, were so decisive that, so long as it was possible to do so, she clung to her concealment. From the very first, the *effective* motive was the hope and prospect of doing good. On frequent occasions in those years during which I was my sister's companion, the fixed purpose of her mind made itself evident in our conversations: it was always uppermost with her, and it continued to prevail with her more and more to the end of life. There was a season in her literary course when fame—such as might seem to be her due, was within her reach; and if it came, it came: but she was not a listener for it. As to the fruits of authorship in a commercial sense, her *motto*, if so one might call it, was this: "My income, whether it be more or less, is the exact sum yearly with which it pleases God to entrust me."

Here, then, is the sort of instance which I have had in prospect when intending to speak of a pen as passing from hand to hand in a family.

There had been a preparation for the service which

was thus to be rendered. The preparation in the case of the biblical expositor, was a long term of years devoted to the most arduous labours among books. The preparation in the case of the two young authors of the poems and hymns that have lived so long and have gone so far, was an education *in* and *for* intellectual labour, along with an excellent moral discipline.

It is customary to give license to egotism when it is only the praise of *industry* that is attempted. Not a step beyond this border will I now make a trespass. The home within which Ann and Jane Taylor received their education, and underwent their preparation of training, was indeed fairly entitled to commendation on account of the occupation of all hours of the day, from early to late, by everybody therein resident. Yet this system of unremitting employment was carried through without any rigorous exactions, without any inflictions, without any consciousness of constraint. Assiduity was the tone and style of the house. Nor were frequent recreations forgotten. Set days and times were duly observed, and were almost superstitiously honoured. I have not seen in later years anything comparable to my father's industry. No man of whose habits I have known anything has seemed to achieve a daily task of the same amount, and of the same *variety*. What he did in giving effect to the operose *system* which he had devised for the education of his children, has been an amazement to me to think of. Some of the still extant

monuments of this comprehensive and laborious scheme of instruction might well pass for enough, if brought forward as the sole products of many years of labour: they were, in fact, the product of the earliest hour of each day: much of this sort was done by the candlelight of the winter's morning. The artisan who was on his way to the place of his daily toil would not fail to see the light in my father's study window:—he, already awake and at work:—his devotions first, and then some educational outfit—in science—history—geography. We all had a perfect confidence in the reasonableness, and the utility, of those methods of instruction, in carrying out which we were required to perform our parts. The apparatus of teaching was huge: nevertheless the daily portion assigned to each of us came quite within the limits of reasonable industry. We were not injuriously crammed, or broken in spirit.

It is probable that there were items in the school cyclopædia which might have been lopped off without serious damage; at least this might be the fact in relation to the female side of the home college. For an instance we might take this: it was not, perhaps, indispensable to the completeness of a girl's education that she should have at her command the terms and the principles of *Fortification.* Nevertheless so it is that among the extant memorials of that early training time—in which the brothers and the sisters of this family took their part, I find outlines of fortified towns—engraved, coloured, and

shaded, the names having been written in upon these outlines by the learner; so we see *glacis*, *counterscarp*, *bastion, fosse, lines of circumvallation;* and it happens that rough drafts of poems and of hymns that have since come to be well known, far and wide, were scrawled upon the margins of some of these lessons in the art of war! Certain branches of knowledge that are quite remote from the range of ordinary education were in fact made familiar to all of this family by these comprehensive methods of teaching; and if in some cases the intellectual gain could scarcely be appreciable, no doubt there was a useful discipline involved in the mere labour of the process.

As to literary ambition, or any eagerness to venture into print, such impulses were far from the minds alike of parents and of children. Certainly a contrary feeling was strong with both parents. The early scribblings of Ann and Jane were known to them, and were not actually prohibited—yet were never encouraged. Jane, in her earliest years, had amused herself with the project of writing and publishing *a book;* but this was only a pastime of childhood, and it was forgotten at an after time, along with other games and romances. There is a portrait of the two sisters, hand in hand, pacing the broad green path of the garden at Lavenham. The girls—nine years old, and seven—are supposed to be reciting, as was their wont, some couplets of their joint composition, anticipatory of their united authorship in later years. On *his*

side the intelligence of the father went in the direction of sober information :—it was knowledge and science, rather than literature or taste, that prevailed with him. On the mother's side, although from her teens she had been scribbling verses, and although she was herself so dependent for her daily comfort upon books, she had a decisive feeling of antagonism toward *authorship*. The thought of it, if it could have occurred to her that her daughters were to appear in that position, would have troubled her. This repugnance toward literature, as a profession, had not sprung, I think, from a perusal of Disraeli's noted book, or from any experience of those "calamities" within the family circle. The feeling had its rise in a dislike of any pursuit that could not plead in its behalf a direct and intelligible *utility*. The question might, indeed, have been put—"Are not these books, a constant supply of which is so important to your own daily comfort—are not these books useful? And if so, then have not the authors of them, or many of them, been well employed in writing them?" This must be granted; nevertheless, a prejudice against *lady* authors kept its ground. It is not improbable that a pungent dislike of certain of the English female sympathisers with the French Revolution, inclusive of Mary Wolstonecraft, had given force to this antipathy.

Nevertheless, and in spite of contrary purposes entertained by parents or children, and notwithstanding the ingrained constitutional modesty of one or two of these

"young persons," authorship did come upon them, as if it came with the force of a destiny, or as if what I have ventured to speak of as a Family Pen, had been thrust between finger and thumb, *volens nolens;* and as if the word had been uttered when the pen was given—"use this—within the compass of your ability—use it always for the best purposes." But at this point I may fancy myself to hear a sarcastic caution from critics of the present time, warning me not in any such way to exaggerate the humble performances of a forgotten literary epoch, or to speak of small things as if they were great things. Great or small in the eye of modern criticism, books of any dimension that last long, and that go far—even the wide world over—may fairly be named without needing an apology. It so happens this very day, while I write, that an advertisement in the day's paper makes mention of new editions of books that had found their way into tens of thousands of families more than sixty years ago. Whether criticism be right or wrong in its verdicts, there must have been a principle of vitality; there must now be a *substance*—a moral force—in books that maintain their *first repute* over and beyond sixty years, and that, throughout this lapse of time, have been in favour wherever English is the language of families. There is no ground of boasting in this instance. The *principle* that has given this vitality to these little books is of a sort that removes them from the jurisdiction of mere criticism. It is a fact not ques-

tionable that these books have had a great share in carrying forward the moral and religious education of at least the religiously disposed mass of two or three generations. And what is true of the families which have accepted them on this side of the Atlantic, is true to the fullest extent as to those on the other side, and the same in every English colony.

I may be admitted to give evidence touching what I have known of my late sister's turn of mind, and her principles, and her motives as a writer; but in doing this I am carried back to Devonshire and to Cornwall. The years of our companionship in Devon and Cornwall were almost my sister's last years as a writer. She wrote little after the time of our last return from the western counties. The recollections I retain of those daily conversations, in which, incidentally, she uttered her inmost mind on subjects of this sort, are recollections of *places*, and of *scenes*, quite as much as of firesides. I should not much care to ramble about in North Devon now that railways have gone thither, and that excursionists in crowds have broken in upon its sweet solitudes! There was a time when the region of which Ilfracombe is the centre had an aspect of seclusion that was highly favourable to tranquil musings, and especially to religious meditations, when such meditations have received a tone from constitutional pensiveness, and also from the discipline of events: it was *pensiveness*, not melancholy. So long ago as the years I have now in view;

an hour's ramble upon the rocks at low water, or over the hills eastward or westward, might be freely taken with scarcely a chance of encountering a human creature—certainly not a visitor from the outer world.

Thus Jane describes one of these solitudes. A drear lone place:—

> "Bare hills and barren downs for miles you trace
> Ere is attain'd the unfrequented place;
> And when arrived, the traveller starts to find
> So wild a spot the abode of humankind."

In these rambles—

> "Mid scatter'd rocks on Devon's northern sea"

she found great pleasure in examining—

> "—— those gay watery grots—
> Small excavations on a rocky shore,
> That seem like fairy baths, or mimic wells,
> Richly emboss'd with choicest weed and shells:
> As if her trinkets Nature chose to hide
> Where nought invaded but the flowing tide."

In longer walks inland, over the moors, she would find the text of her meditations while tracing

> "The curious work of Nature—
> A work commenced when Time began its race,
> And not yet finish'd—
> The rich grey mosses broider'd on a rock."

It would be a mistake to infer from this taste for seclusion, and this relish of Nature—when not gaily attired—that my sister's mood was gloomy, or unsocial, or ascetic. It was quite otherwise. Wit and pensive-

ness have in several noted instances shown themselves to be two phases of the same intellectual conformation. There is not a paragraph in what she has written for young or for mature readers that is of a morbid or sullen quality. All has a healthy complexion. No sentiment is in any such way *individualized* as that it would not easily combine with an energetic and cheerful performance of ordinary duties. This is the rule—a cheerful mood, and a readiness for useful and charitable offices, must always be right and good for each and for all of us, young and old—whatever may be the tendency of the individual temperament. My sister might indeed indulge feeling and imagination in a morning's walk, but when she returned to her little study and took pen in hand, she thought no longer of herself, but only of her reader—and especially of her *young* reader. There was no insincerity in this case. At the time of our sojourn—a sojourn of several years—in Devon and Cornwall, there had come upon her a breadth of feeling as to the discharge of what I venture to call her *ministry* through the press. A ten years of this ministry, with an ever-increasing extension of its field, had at length availed to put her constitutional diffidence out of countenance, if so one might say; for there could no longer be room to doubt that an opportunity was presented to her—a door was opened, and it was a wide door, and a sense of responsibility thence ensued :—it was as if, when she had her pen in hand, a great congre-

gation of the young—from childhood up to riper years, had come within reach of her vision and her voice—even of so feeble a voice. Was it fame that she cared for? I find in her home letters of this date, frequent expressions of this kind:—a warm commendation of a new volume had appeared in some monthly publication—she asks to see it, and says—"I am much more anxious to see blame than praise, and the thought that you may keep back anything of that kind would fidget and discourage me beyond measure."

Gifted in an unusual degree with an insight of human nature, my sister's humbleness of mind saved her from the cynical mood. Writing to a friend—an authoress, she says,—"It is only studying *nature*, without which I could do *nothing*. If you are at a loss for a character, take mine, and you will find faults enough to last out a whole volume. I assure you that I take greater liberties with *myself* in that way than with any of my friends or neighbours; and I have really found so far, that the beam in my own eye makes me see more clearly how to take the mote out of theirs."

The change from Devon to Cornwall was not for the better as to scenery. Mount's Bay, in a bright morning, is a fair sample of what the English coast, south and west, has to show in that line; but it should be seen in sunshine; whereas—and this is the commendation of the North Devon coast—wintry skies and rolling seas suit it well, and give it a charm in harmony with

itself. Nevertheless, if the *material* of Cornwall was less to her taste, the *immaterial* yielded more than a compensation. Friendships were formed at Marazion which came home to her affectionate nature, and which, moreover, were of a sort differing much from those of earlier years. These new friendships brought into view an aspect of Christian earnestness with which my sister had not hitherto been intimately conversant. Her early intimacies had been of the sort to which might be applied the epithet—*Christianized intellectualism.* The friendships which had their beginning in Cornwall were, in a more decisive sense, Christian-like. Among these, I think I may be free to mention one, the effect of which upon my sister's feelings, and, I might say, upon her opinions and purposes, was very perceptible. If I use the words *friendship* or *intimacy* in this instance, such terms must submit to a qualification, or to an abatement of their usual sense. The Christian lady—Lydia Grenfell, who had been the betrothed of so eminent a person as the missionary, Henry Martyn—was herself indeed an eminent person. If you were in her company half an hour only, you felt her high quality as a Christian woman: you would say, this is one who, if called to accept the crown of martyrdom, might be looked to as fit and ready to wear it; and when her actual history came to be known, you would understand that indeed she had passed through a fiery trial not at all less severe than many a martyrdom.

This personal history does not come within my range in this instance. What I have to do with is—the silent influence of a year's contact with this heroic lady. Hers was a heroism graced with profound humility. This contact could not fail to find elements congenial in the temperament of one like Jane Taylor. Yet the constitutional framework of the two minds was widely dissimilar; but there was a connecting link:—*devotedness*, in a Christian sense, and a preference always of the claims of duty, had been Jane's rule and principle; but now there was in her view daily a devotedness that had carried the victim through the fire of intense suffering. My sister had proffered her services to Miss Grenfell as a teacher in the Sunday School at Marazion, and it was while labouring in the school that she obtained a more intimate knowledge of this lady's eminent qualities than the occasions of ordinary intercourse could have imparted. The result was an enhanced sense of responsibility in the use of any gift or talent that may be employed in promoting the welfare of those around us, or of any whose welfare we may in any way consider as coming within the circle of our influence. Viewed in this light, authorship and literary repute, while they lost importance in one sense, rose in value in another sense. This deepened feeling of responsibility may be traced in my sister's letters to the members of her family and to her intimate friends.

When I thus speak of authorship, and of the estimate

that is formed by a writer of the value of literary reputation, there is a condition that should be kept in view. If a writer thrusts into a place of secondary regard his or her literary reputation, and aims at a higher mark with a steady purpose, the question presents itself—what in fact is the *offering* that is thus laid upon the altar? At the time when, as I am now affirming, my sister's acquaintance with this Christian lady was producing a deep and silent effect upon her own mind, and upon her course as a writer, she had achieved what may be called a *second success* in her own literary sphere. There had been an interval of several years between the publication of "Original Poems" and "Hymns," and the appearance of several volumes addressed to mature readers. These volumes, from the moment of publication, were successful in a very unusual degree. Large editions came out, from year to year. Whatever Jane Taylor put forth, was warmly greeted by the public that had learned to look for her name. Literary ladies who may have been successful in an equal degree, would not, I think, be severely blamed by their friends if they did show some elation, or seemed *conscious* of the favour they had won. As to *this* successful writer—so I can affirm—she suffered no damage to her humbleness of heart, or none that could be detected by those nearest to her, from all the fame she had acquired. This is my testimony concerning her. What she wrote after this time was often playful, and sparkled with wit; but nothing indicated an

overthrow of that balance of the mind which had always been her distinction—it was her characteristic. Known or unknown to the world, she was always *sober-minded*, she was always willing to abide in the shade, she was always near at hand for any work of friendship or of charity: to the very end—I mean to the day of her last attendance at public worship—she was a diligent Sunday-school teacher.

In her earlier productions Jane Taylor wrote in combination with her still surviving sister, concerning whom a testimony of similar import might be borne—but she survives. In her later writings, or some of them, she took a part with her mother, who had already published successfully. Of her, and of others of the family into whose hand a pen has come, there may be room to say what would occupy another page.

Books many, and more than might easily be catalogued, have been put forth with a preface or advertisement very much resembling what here follows:—"To any who may glance at the following pages, it will be unnecessary to observe, that they were not designed by the writer for the public eye;—that they were, what they profess to have been, the effusions of a mother's solicitude for the welfare of a beloved child; for there is too little appearance of study throughout, to excite a suspicion that the character, or the circumstances, are assumed. A parent who, from increasing infirmities, found it difficult frequently to converse with her child,

adopted this method of conveying instruction and of presenting the fruits of experience to an inexperienced mind."

Whether or not similar apologies for publication may always have been absolutely warrantable, or quite true to the facts of the case, *this* apology was strictly so. Long (several years) had the manuscript been in hand:—no thought of publication had entered the mind of the writer, who was then midway in her fifty-sixth year, and who, as I have already said, although herself a great consumer of books, entertained a sort of prejudice —if not against authors at large, yet certainly against lady authors, who, as she often said, would have done better to employ themselves in mending the family stockings. But so it comes about that manuscripts—all ready for the printer, do, somehow, find their way into the printer's hand: this is the "wont way" of manuscripts that have been long in store: "it was suggested" to this writer "that what was likely to benefit an individual, might, if communicated, become useful to others," and so the book at length came out—a publisher being an accessory before the fact. True also, and I think quite in harmony with the writer's inmost feeling, is what follows when she says, "To other families," in consequence of the opinion to which she had listened, "this endeavour to employ her pen beneficially is commended, without solicitude for its reputation:" that is to say, its reputation in a literary sense. It was so in truth; and a

son may be allowed to affirm as much as this for his mother. A constitutional retiringness—a taste for home duties, a willingness to live and die unknown—these dispositions had kept her, although always pen in hand, far out of the way of publication, even until so late in life. She then began a ten years' course of authorship; and on the supposition that success may be taken as evidence of qualification, this sort of warranting attended my mother's books—from the first of them to the last. What would *now* be reckoned a *success* was won by these volumes. The tranquil and pensive meditative strain, the practical tendency of every page, and the quiet religious tone, undoubtedly evangelic, but not methodistical, found a religious public prepared to listen to a matronly writer who was thus qualified to lead it through green pastures and by noiseless streams, on what one might call the sunny side of the Valley of Humiliation.

Those were indeed good days—fifty years ago—for writers of the class with which my mother's name would stand connected. There was then a public, especially a female public, that had, for a long while, been well held in hand by writers of whom Hannah More was undoubtedly the chief. Hannah More—*protégée*, call her, of Dr. Johnson—Miss Hamilton, and a half dozen writers, some Christian and some in various degrees Christianized, and therefore antagonistic to Maria Edgeworth and to those who were then tainted with the French Revolution

atheism. This indulgent public—under tilth as one might say—had, at a later time, received a broadcast of vigorous thought from the hands of Robert Hall, John Foster, Olinthus Gregory, and others of the clique that were banded together as the staff of the *Eclectic Review*. (In this staff my elder sister, Ann, was then numbered, and she had won for herself, some years earlier, a good position among these able writers.) It was not that either the mother or the daughter Jane had made any pretensions of *this* kind; but she entered upon a field in a corner of which there was room for her, and where she came to be cordially welcomed. The books of which I am speaking were published long before the coming on of the modern agonistic paroxysm in literature. The entire period of a generation intervenes between that distant easy time and the modern era of sensation novels and of "series," and of mortal elbowings for life, for fame, and for cash. In those remote eras zephyrs whispered in trees, tornadoes did not tear them up by the roots; straws might take their gambols in snug corners, but oaks were not shivered limb from limb. The time that is now next in turn to come will show whether there may not be needed a return to a slower rate of going. Perhaps literature, in its next stage, will have dropped out of the gallop and fallen into the trot or the amble—which last pace is, in truth, the pace that suits it best. In that time to come literature may have learned to keep itself

within the limits of spontaneous thought; and books may be written for a long-meditated purpose; and not urged into brief existence by application of hot-irons and cataplasms.

In a family of which the daughters and the mother had written successfully, it was likely that the father, who himself had written, and who through life had been teeming with educational thought, should essay to write and to publish. To him also—on his own field—a good measure of favour was shown; and he also, from out of the stores of many years of laborious experience in the conveyance of knowledge, and in the expression of sober truths, brought forward his contribution toward furnishing the shelves in a family library with several highly serviceable volumes. The educational outfit in *these* times, it is true, has needed books more elaborately worked up. Nevertheless, some of these of olden fashion have not, as yet, been superseded.

Inasmuch as in this paper I abstain alike from encomium and from criticism, neither of which would at all become me, and as I am speaking of the *family pen*, estimated according to one rule only—which is a rule of easy application—namely, success—I am free to introduce here the name of my brother Jefferys, some while ago deceased. He was *gifted;* he had his faculty, his talent, and he also drew to himself many readers; and a time may come when the genuine humour and

the strong sense that were at his command may bring his books again into notice.*

In the first page of this paper I have asked a hearing from the "Courteous Reader;" and now I may well wish that any reader who is not good-natured and candid would get himself out of hearing. If he will please to do so, then I may go on a step or two further, in making up a report concerning the Family Pen. In doing this, my kind reader will indulge me, individually, with only as much personal visibility as may be needed in uttering a word or two in the autobiographical style. I must do what I am now intending to do, in that broken and elliptical manner—or if not so, then not at all.

About the date of my earliest adventure in literature (otherwise than as one of an editor's staff)—or let it be about five and forty years ago, it chanced that late one sultry afternoon, I was going from shop to shop in Holborn and Middle Row, among the dealers in old books. I was inquiring for some volume, I forget what, not very often asked for. The young man behind the counter to whom I put my question, was perhaps busy in attending to a more important customer; and then it is likely that he had to make search for the book I had named upon some out-of-the-way shelf of the back shop. Meantime, there was on the counter a volume of which

* The reader may judge for himself of the soundness of this opinion by the extracts from the writings of Jeffreys Taylor, which are given in the second volume of this work.—[EDITOR.]

I then knew nothing :—I took my seat, and just to while away the time I opened and read—up and down in this volume. The neat perspicuous style of the writer was its first attraction, but then the substance and the *animus* of the book were a still greater attraction. Until that summer's evening I had believed that I knew as much perhaps of Church history as there could be any need to know. I had read or had listened to Mosheim and Milner; and perhaps a book or two beside; but if so—and if it be Church history in its reality that is contained and treated of in those heavy books—if so, then what may be the meaning of this book? To me this casual reading was the sudden lifting up of a veil, so that the veritable things of the third and fourth century might be gazed at, and rightfully understood; and so an inference might be gathered. I do not now remember whether the young man at the shop in Middle Row found the volume I had at first asked for; but it is certain that I eagerly paid him his price for a copy of the extant writings of SULPICIUS SEVERUS. This book is now on my table; a little book it is, but it has been the harbinger of many folios.

Yet how could it be that this small volume—and even a small portion of it, should thus have the power to put me aghast, and should lead me to think that, hitherto, I had known nothing—or nothing in its genuine figure and colours—of the Christianity of the early Christian ages? That it should be so was no doubt a fault; or it

had come from inadvertence, or from a careless credulity, not perhaps highly culpable at that time. It is certain that if I had duly considered the import of *a few paragraphs* or sentences in Mosheim, and in Jortin, and in Milner; and, moreover, if I had trusted Gibbon where he may safely be trusted, I could not thus have failed to gather the meaning of those writers, or have remained substantially ignorant of what the aspect of the Christianized southern people of Europe really was in the fourth century. But who is this Sulpicius Severus? He was the contemporary, and the intimate friend, though a junior, of Paulinus, the Bishop of Nola. Inquire then for a volume of about the same bulk—containing the poetry and the epistles of this (Christian) bishop. There you will find enough of the obdurate, and, as it seems, the incorrigible paganism of those sunny lands:—even this paganism—gilt, varnished, and got up anew, after a dozen of names stolen from the New Testament have been neatly veneered into the places of the gods and goddesses of the ancient worship. Why then have modern writers left us in almost total ignorance of the simple truth in these matters? There are several reasons that might be mentioned, but which I must not now stay to bring forward.

The two or three books which in this incidental manner I had now got possession of, were far from contenting me: they did but quicken an appetite which must be satisfied. In a word, I could not rest where

I then stood. I could not bring my own perplexed thoughts concerning our Christianity into any sort of quiescence until I had surrounded myself, in part at least, with the means of knowing how it has fared with Christianity in working its way, on and on, through many centuries, over rough ground, with our crooked and wayward human nature as its travelling companion.

But here I have to enter a caution to the effect that I may be fairly quit of what is merely personal in this paper, and may stand clear of serious blame, at least in the view of my candid reader. I do not forget that I am entering upon a *Preserve* in thus talking about ecclesiastical literature; and I should show my certificate, officially endorsed, as a warrant for such an intrusion. But if I hold in hand no such certificate—no warrant at all, then I am seeming to make a pretension which must need an apology. Church history, and heavy folios of Latin and Greek, are for the clergy, and for the learned. But I am not clerical; and as to learning, I have ever abstained from what might sound like a challenge on the ground of scholarship. Where, then, is my justification? A word or two will convey the whole of my plea—if, indeed, I have any plea. I have cared little in the circuit of antiquity for what is purely matter of taste or erudition. I have cared little for *antiquarianism* of any sort; but I have cared intensely for whatever may be found to bear upon the

history of our human nature, as it has played its part upon this arena of mysteries — the field of religious development, ancient and modern. Most of all, and with an eager curiosity, I have desired to know whatever may be known of the history of nations—GOD-WARD, through the lapse of ages. But if so, then the hundred, or the two hundred of volumes, usually designated as *ecclesiastical*, constitute, in mass, the principal part of the materials of any such apparatus. Consequently, whoever has surrendered himself to meditation on *this* ground, and is sincerely anxious to know the truth, must acquaint himself, more or less perfectly, with these extant documents of Church history. Cost what it may to purchase these volumes—cost what it may to make some acquaintance with them, both of these costs must be submitted to;—or if this may not be, then you should throw up the wish and intention to know anything, in a genuine manner, of what our Christianity has been, and of what phases it has worn, and of what disguises have come to wear its names, in these many centuries past.

The reply which I may hear is this:—"Not so—you need neither buy the books, nor read them. Here at hand are the modern Church history writers. These writers were learned men; and they have done what they have done *authentically*. Do you dare to mistrust them? Do you think that they would wilfully mislead you? and have they not crowded the foot of almost every page with quotations in Greek and Latin, or with

references to books?" To this pointed question—put perhaps in angry tone, "Do I *mistrust* the writers and compilers of Church history?" my reply is simply this. I do not know, nor can I ever know, whether I may safely trust, or should mistrust, these writers, until I have looked into the original materials for myself. Besides, it is not a question of the mere *trustworthiness* of writers—using that word in its vulgar acceptation. The bare facts may have been stated in dry accordance with the evidence; but yet I may fail to see and to apprehend the veritable things of a remote age. Very few writers—and it *is very few* on the field of religious history, have been gifted with the *seeing eye*, or the imaginative faculty, that are requisite for understanding, and for spreading out to view, the actions, and the actors, and the scenes of those times. Gibbon could do this—when he willed to do it; but he had no consciousness of the religious life, and he could do nothing better than picture, in a false sense, what came before him, and what could be interpreted only on the hypothesis of the reality of the religious life.

Nor is it merely the want of a *faculty* or of a natural endowment that has been the disparagement of Church history writers. All of them, or all of them in these post-Reformation ages, have written *with an intention*, or for a purpose, avowed or concealed. If, indeed, they are impartial, they have been soulless; or if full of feeling, the feeling has been *animus;* and it has betrayed itself in

every paragraph. Read Bossuet, or read Milner, and say if it be not so! The sheer reality of things—our human nature, *such as it is*, no more shows itself in these works than it does in Chateaubriand's "Génie du Christianisme," or other books of historic romance, written to further "a cause." Church history has been written by learned presbyters, by learned bishops, by learned professors in colleges; nor is this to be wondered at or blamed; but then Church history has all along been *clerical* or professional; it has come from a well-defined point of view; nor has it in any instance betrayed the body-ecclesiastical whence proximately it has sprung. I will be bold to say that there is good room on this ground for something better; better than the mystified Germans have given us, or even Neander. We do not want profound philosophisings *about* Church history; we want the religious history of the nations among whom the Gospel has been preached, and has been instituted. If any such history as this has appeared, it has not chanced to come in my way. I have not heard of it; but it will be granted to us in its time; it is, as we say, a want of the time now passing, and it will be forthcoming, so I surmise, in the proximate decade of time.

The writing a history—ecclesiastical or political—is no trifling affair; it should be the business of a life, and it should be undertaken by those who lack no qualification for the task which they freely bring upon their shoulders. It may, however, be lawful for those who would shrink

from any such enormous undertaking as this to indulge in trains of meditation which may have been suggested to them in the lapse of years by the mere presence of books, and by such acquaintance with them as may have accrued incidentally or purposely from year to year in forty years.

To write *a book*, or even to put forth a pamphlet, is to challenge a world of contradiction, and to wake up criticism. Most of all is this the case if the subject touches tender places in theology, or treads anywhere upon ecclesiastical sensitiveness. One cannot think half an hour upon any such subject, while the thought of *a book* or *a pamphlet* is entertained, just in the same simple-hearted manner in which one may indulge meditations *on the very same field*, when no hypothesis of publication is at all presumable. The two styles of thinking are essentially dissimilar. Whatever it be that is thought, written, and committed to the printer, is, in some sense, antagonistic; it is avowedly so, or tacitly it is so. One puts on armour, and takes spear in hand; one buckles up to confront the enemy *in print*. Wholly of another sort are those tranquil musings which, at the furthest, will not travel beyond the limit of the amiable home circle. And now, at this point, indulgent reader, let me indulge myself in affirming the blessedness of a secluded country life: it is *here*, and it is in the midst of meadows and ploughed fields that one may think, and not fear. It is here that meditations, innocent of treason, innocent of heresy, and

clear of wrongful imputations, may be indulged in through half a century!

Trains of thought, taking their rise from the books on the shelves around, will not fail to show a reflection, or a refraction from the objects and the movements of the outer world. So it has been, therefore, that while, in that outer world, and in the religious quarter of that world, deep-going revolutions have been running their round, meditations which have taken their text or their colour from books have come to be entangled with the agitations of the outer world. This word of explanation may be needed for what is to follow.

Meditations that are silent, and are not destined to the printer, differ greatly from thoughts and conclusions that are likely to be put into type. These latter do not appear until after they have been packed in chapters, and strung into paragraphs, and have been made to pass repeated revisions, and strengthened with foot-notes, and riveted with references—they are, or are intended to pass for, workmanlike work. Not so meditations of the first-mentioned sort. These are the slowly accruing inductions of thousands of chance thoughts: they are like coral formations—they are the unnoticed increments of day after day, while summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, have been running their noiseless round. If you ask me how it is that I have come to think so and so upon debated questions, or where are my authorities, or what is my warrant for conclusions of

this colour, perhaps I am not able at the moment to come down with book and chapter. The best I can do is to say, that, if you require me to write, *and* then to *print* on the subject, I will give the requisite attention to it, and shall be prepared to come out—it may be three months hence or twelve. But I am now ready to affirm that the slowly-formed involuntary inductions of thirty or forty years may be of more genuine quality than the laboured work of preparation for getting out a book, whether at longer or shorter notice. But what is to become of any such random meditations? *Book them*, and then they cease to be what I would acknowledge as indeed the whole of my mind on this or that subject. *Print them*, and then they forfeit their quality. If it be so, your reply will be — "Leave your musings where they are—floating about in your home circle. The world will go on its way, content to know nothing of what you may have thought." I can easily bring myself to believe this; nevertheless, I am impelled to throw out, at random, a page or so of meditations on at least one subject, that has never been for any length of time out of my mind.

In these years, while I have lived among the books of which just now I have said something, a movement has been going on in the World of Thought—sometimes as an under-current—noiseless and unseen—sometimes, as lately it has done, frothing up and bubbling on the surface, like the scalding waters of Iceland—but the

drift is ever the same; nor is the issue to be doubted—if it goes on—the drift or *direction* is toward the dark abyss wherein human thought is lost. Some way before that issue is arrived at, there are stations at which a halt will be made, and where a new turn may be taken. Many, we may well believe it—more than a few, shall stop short of the abyss, and they will hold fast to their hope. There are reasons enough why they should do so; but with these I am not at this time concerned. What I intend is to ask the before-named indulgent reader of this paper to listen to a page of perhaps incoherent meditations which haunt the place where I sit, surrounded with books.

As I look round at my shelves, no very difficult effort of the imagination is needed for fancying that the writers of these folios—the great orators, the martyrs, the theologues, the apologists, the doctors—these worthies stand out, each in front of his own literary creation, and that where and while they so make their appearance, I am gifted with an ear to hear what they say, and am gifted also with a faculty of speech, so that I may freely put searching questions to them, and then may listen to catch their answers. In realizing a conception of this sort I find myself very greatly helped out—*ideally*—by pictorial means. Often and often, as I have opened these folios, I have looked anew at the effigies of the men—the Fathers of that time. As to several of these effigies, they are copies, carefully made, as it is evident, from the

illuminated manuscripts of the works of the Father, and many of them show so much of verisimilitude, as to costume, and as to the surrounding embellishments, and they agree so well, physiognomically, with the good man's reputed dispositions and conduct, that one is forced to accept them as genuine portraitures. So it is, or thus I believe—stood erect, and so looked while in presence of the illuminating limner—the noted leaders of that age. Thus Ὁ ἌΓΙΟΣ Ephraim the Syrian—and thus the great Athanasius; and if, in *this* instance, the portrait be a mere invention of the artist, then that artist must indeed have been gifted in a marvellous degree with the realizing conceptive faculty; for indeed this august figure, and this attitude, and this unearthly countenance, are a fitting image of the man who sustained a martyrdom of many years, upheld by the faith of "things unseen and eternal." And thus looked the puritanic Theodoret; and thus also the luxurious scholar, gentleman, and monk, the great Basil. And thus Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed orator, copious in exposition of Holy Scripture; and thus Epiphanius, and thus others who, with more or less of authenticity, as works of art, have left us in these illuminations the means of thinking of them, such as they were, in habit, in their attire, and in expression of countenance.

But while thus by these means I see, as if here present, the noted men of that age, it is many more than them-

selves individually that come into view; for the men of their time to whom they spoke are present also—even the congregation that thronged the basilica—and that listened, and that broke forth in loud plaudits with clapping of hands. Or to cite another instance, that of the holy man named above, Ephraim, the monk and the preacher and poet of Edessa. It is thus that I read, opening the volume at a chance—"Beloved, if thou art minded to enter this place [monastery] and wouldest spend thy days among us, and wouldest here serve the Lord Jesus Christ, then listen to me." Thus reading, it is not the good man alone that comes into view; but it is the cowled companions of his ascetic mode of life: it is the forty or the fifty brethren of this cœnobium. These all enter by right into the vision of Christian antiquity; they come following their abbot. Admit the principal, then, the brethren slip in at the same door. So it will be also with the abbot Nilus, who governed several neighbouring monasteries (convents of monks) around the Nitrian salt-lakes, deep hid in the burning wilderness, westward in the Libyan desert: the father abbot comes, and with him there is a deputation of the brethren, and along with these there are several hundred Christian people to whom his epistles were addressed, who needed comfort, rebuke, or instruction. Journeying some way farther along the African coast, I find the illustrious Augustine: he is writing, or preaching, or visiting his flock; or he is in conference with his

presbyters and deacons. This great and good man, to say the truth, occupies as much space on my shelves as I can well spare him, for he comes with (or *within*) thirteen imperial folios, and each volume contains over a thousand pages. I find him, just now, addressing his stated congregation in the episcopal church, and the key-note of these discourses is to this effect—the words are *the very first* that have met the eye as I open a volume, by chance; and I ask my reader to keep them in mind ready for what I may have to say about them presently. The bishop—his arm is outstretched, and his hand is upward pointed—thus speaks: "Our hope, my brethren, springs not from the things of this present time, nor is it a hope of this present world, nor does it bear upon those things which blind the minds of men who forget God. Not of this sort is our hope; but it takes its hold upon —I know not what, which God has promised, and which man has not as yet received." With such a word as this on his lips (a word which Plato would have eagerly listened to, and Cicero also, although not Aristotle) there can be no doubt that the fervent Bishop of Hippo shall be invited to come in, and he may bring with him his hearers, how many soever they may be. Thus I find that I am gathering into my study indeed a goodly company—it is a great congregation: or I may say it is "a great cloud of witnesses." I do not in this place employ that word "witness" in the apostolic sense, as if it meant the passive spectators of a transaction and of the actors

therein, on a stage, or on the arena of a Roman amphitheatre. But those whom I thus challenge are to give their evidence in the *forensic* sense of the word—they are witnesses called into court where a great cause is in question, and where pleadings and counter-pleadings are even now to be listened to. The suit in progress relates to the hope of an inheritance incorruptible and eternal; and the witnesses that are now standing at the door, ready to answer to their names, are required, each in his time, and each in his own manner, to vouch for the fact that a great revolution—wide in its range, permanent in its results, deep in its bearing upon human nature—had been effected and was still extant, and was then in progress at the hour when the said witness lived and had knowledge of the facts. I am not intending, according to the customary dogmatic usage, to cite authorities, book, chapter, and page, of this or that edition, in support of the articles of a creed. To do this may be quite proper in a proper place; but *this* is not a place proper for any purpose of that sort. What I wish to do—so far as it may be done within the compass of ten or twelve pages—is, to put in view a rough outline of facts which, unless we can give some other and a *reasonable* explanation of them, must receive a *Christian* explanation, involving the weighty consequences which thence ensue.

If in this manner I go from shelf to shelf, around my little library, inviting the authors of these books to answer to their names when summoned to do so, I ought

to consider from what distant regions they must come. The men themselves, and their Christian contemporaries, will have come from the glowing heights of Sinai, and from the deserts beyond: they will have come from the green slopes and valleys of Palestine, and from the sultry gorge of the Jordan, and from the wooded clefts of Lebanon: they must have come from the Syrian coast-ward, and from the then populous provinces of Asia Minor, and from the Ægean Islands, from Cyprus, and Rhodes; as also from Cilicia, and Cappodocia, and Pontus, and Paphlagonia, and Galatia, and Phrygia, and Pisidia, and Lycia, and Caria, and Lydia, and Mysia, and Bithynia, and from thence over to Thrace, and Macedonia. This is not a barren list of names, geographical only in its meaning, for each name of a province, and of each principal city in each province, wakes up a vivid recollection; and with each name is associated the name of some martyr or preacher—not wanting the names of accomplished men, who were the lights of their era. The time would fail me to speak of Nazianzen, and of Nyssen, and of Basil, and of Cyril, and of Eusebius, and of Epiphanius. We pass on then to Greece proper, and so round about into Italy, and thence to Gaul, and to Spain, and to Lusitania, and to Britain, Caledonia and Hibernia. The circuit thence is to North Africa, and so on to Egypt, and to Abyssinia. Beyond these borders of the Imperium Romanum we should travel far, and yet everywhere should find our brethren in Christ.

Everywhere I should find those who, whatever may be their vernacular, yet if I uttered in their hearing the few words which just now I have cited from a sermon of the Bishop of Hippo, would start up at the sound, and would repeat this confession as their own confession, and would say: "This is *our* hope, as it is yours; the Christ whom you preach is 'both yours and ours;' for to us of the furthest East, and to those of the remotest West, it is true that there is one hope of our calling—Christ in us the hope of the life eternal." So it is that from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Saviour of the world has already been proclaimed and trusted in.

And as the area geographically is large, from every part of which these witnesses for Christ may be summoned, so are the years many during the lapse of which this witness-bearing has been heard. If I take the testimony in the manner already spoken of,—that is to say, from the books around me,—then, in chronological order, the witness-roll of antiquity will extend itself through much more than a thousand years. I listen, and I hear this TESTIMONY, ever the same in its subject, and its substance, and its awful unearthly import. I hear it in the mild paternal voices of the apostolic Clement and his colleagues. I hear it in the dying confession of Ignatius, and of Polycarp, and of a great company—even the "noble army of martyrs." I catch the words of this confession—immortal sounds they are,

audible amidst the howlings of the beasts of the amphitheatre, and the yells of the ten thousand assessors of those imperial shows. I hear this testimony in the moans of those women of Bithynia, whom Pliny—gentleman and philosopher—tortured to no purpose; and of the women who were torn to the death at Lyons and Vienne. The testimony comes also in the irrisive taunts of Athenagoras, and in the remonstrances of Tatian, of Irenæus, of Pantœnus, and in the Martyr Justin's noble pleadings for mercy and justice; and in the strenuous reasonings of Tertullian, and in the learned eloquence of Origen;—in all these many voices there is one testimony, the testimony of men and of women, who would not win a release from fires and racks, or the teeth of beasts, by denying their hope of "a better resurrection." Thus we move onward along the track of time; and if, in the earlier age, we have held converse with sufferers "of whom the world was not worthy," we find ourselves, in the centuries next ensuing, in the company of men—philosophers, orators, and accomplished writers—who take up the same testimony, and make the same profession of their allegiance to Christ, and of their hope in Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

These witnesses, whom I thus summon, coming as they do from lands far remote, and belonging as they do to many eras, and speaking each in his vernacular, are distinguished by every diversity of national character, and of individual disposition and training. These

differences are extreme; and the instruction which they had severally received varied in all degrees between that of the Coptic monk, who knew nothing beyond his local dialect, and the man of universal erudition—the master of many languages and of many philosophies. Such were Origen, Clement, Eusebius, Jerome. Differ as these writers might, as to the conditions of their birth and their education, and differ also as they might by the variety and the amount of their acquirements; or seem to differ as they might, if required to put the specialities of a creed into the terms of a formal confession of faith, article by article, yet it will be true that, looked at, listened to, on grounds which I shall mention, this testimony is always *One Testimony;* it is so, not as if by force, binding together many separate elements, but as by the inner harmony of principles which can never be held apart.

In this paper I excuse myself from the logical obligation of throwing my meditations into a book-like order. I am not compelled (an indulgent reader will not compel me) to put the first things foremost, and the second-rate things in a second place; but to take my instances and illustrations just as they come to hand. And inasmuch as these random thoughts are thoughts *among books*, so it shall be that these instances shall be such as may show their bookish origin.

I should judge it to be a misunderstanding of what I mainly intend, if now, with the two sets of books in my

view—the classical, or, as we call them, the *profane* authors, on the one side, and the Christian authors on the other side—I should set myself to work to make up an argument in the manner of an antithesis, so as by all means to give effect to a contrast. In truth, I *could not* undertake to show that the light of pagan antiquity was a darkness, not a light. Ungracious, as well as wrongful and superfluous, would be the endeavour to disparage the ancient splendour—its philosophy, its oratory, its poetry, its art. The Greek intelligence, and by consequence the Roman, was indeed an effulgence, and it is so to this present moment; and as such it will continue to be looked to and admired, so long as mind is mind. But the light of classic antiquity was as the diffused illumination of a cloudy day. There was then no direct radiation from above; and when at noon of an over-clouded day the sun suddenly shines forth in his power, we all rejoice in those beams—ἄνωθεν, nor do we think we do a wrong to the ancient classic splendour to exclaim, "The *darkness* is passed, and the True Light now shineth."

This is the apostolic profession—"The Darkness is past, and the TRUE LIGHT now shineth;" and in such terms as these the Teacher from Heaven announces His advent. He says—"I am the Light of the world." But has it been so? Do the facts of the history of the human mind bear out this assumption? In proof of the affirmative it would be trite, and here it would be needless and wearisome, to adduce volumes of evidence,

under the several heads of philosophy, and of abstract theology, and of the humanisation of the social system, and of the elevation of morals. All these topics are now familiar to all readers; nor are the facts open to contradiction: they are available in proof of this principal fact—that CHRIST has been, and is, the Light of the World. I look round upon these shelves, and see them laden with the products of that illumination which Christianity has diffused, from age to age—giving to the brightest minds of each age a true *direction*, and an impulse also in that direction: but not to these only. Come with me into the less frequented corners of my store:—look into the remote recesses of the Christian literature of ages gone by.

A true light, as compared with a meteorologic illumination, or an artificial radiance, or lamp light, shows its quality in this way, that it travels right on with a steady force—it moves as with a momentum that carries it even into the obscurest corners, into the dimmest places; into the very nooks of the world. Now for some facts in illustration of this. I take down from their places some five, six, or seven books—the works of writers, extant indeed, but now very seldom mentioned; they are little known or thought of, and seldom quoted. On my table here, for instance, is Isidore of Pelusium; and here is Cassian, the monastic codist, and with him, bound in one, are Fulgentius and Maxentius; here also are Methodius, and Cyril of Jerusalem, and Synesius, and then

John of Damascus; and I might easily name as many more; but these are enough. I ask you now to open at hazard any one of these books, and in five minutes you will find some passage, longer or shorter, which might well be cited as evidence of what is here affirmed. The True Light was there shining, and it is shining even into the darkest places. This light, as here we find it in its dimness, is nothing less than the light of the Eternal Effulgence: it is the light of the knowledge of God in Christ, who is Himself the brightness of the Father's glory: it is the authentic knowledge of Life Everlasting: it is the knowledge, moreover, of transgression—as sin against God: and it is the knowledge of repentance, and of the forgiveness of sins. This is a light—a beam of which we see in these very books: not in books that are illuminated by the sparkling genius, and the eloquence, and the various erudition of distinguished men; but in books that are scarcely recommended by any measure of those qualities; and into which no one now ever looks, unless it be for ascertaining some fact in history or criticism: this true light of divine knowledge has, as says the Psalmist, "made wise the simple"—even the simple ones—who were the authors of these sombre, faded, dust-covered folios. The question might be asked, how was it, as to these books, so little recommended as they are by intelligence, that they came to be copied from time to time, and thus made their appearance in print two or three hundred years ago? Many of the choicest

literary treasures, alas! have foundered in the passage of these dark ages. A reply in full to this question would include some details relating to the copying system in those times, for which I have no space in this paper. But a reply in part does touch my present subject. To a great extent it was the fact that the class of books now referred to came in turn into the copyist's hands simply because *something* must be done in that line; and as to books on the classical, or, as we say, the profane side, the supply was rapidly falling off. The copyist who had already effected a copy of a Homer, or a Demosthenes, or a Cicero, would seek for something new, if new might be found. But here would arise a difficulty, for on the side of pagan literature, books, *new* books, were becoming rare: it was more and more so: the springs of paganism were running low: the fountains of its thought were drying up! I will not allege what might provoke an argument; but will only say what is unquestionable, which is this, that when we pass forward beyond the times of Lucian, Athenæus, Diogenes Laertius, Dion Cassius, writers on the field of pagan classic literature are becoming very scarce: in fact, the literature of heathenism is undergoing sublimation: it is ceasing to be. Whether in philosophy, or in poetry, or oratory, or moral disquisition, the wells of mind are running dry: it is as if the rubbish of the decaying temples had slid down into them, choking the sources of water. Take the facts—they are conspicuous.

—and draw your inference. THE MASTER of all thought had now himself come upon the ground. It is CHRIST that had claimed sovereignty in the world of mind and of feeling: paganism, as a fruit-bearing tree, was doomed to wither: CHRIST had passed by, and He had said—looking at the tree, then green in leaf—"Let no man eat fruit of thee, henceforth for ever." Such fruit of that tree as had actually been gathered and housed, should be preserved for use in all time future—it is precious; but as to the tree itself, the sap has been bled out of the trunk, nor would it return to it any more. Christ says, "I am the true vine," and every branch that takes not thence its sap is doomed to wither.

Thus it is written—"He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." A word from on high it was. But not now to look beyond the range to which these random meditations are confined, I take from its place one of that class of books just above mentioned—a third or fourth rate book—it is "The Homilies" of a Coptic Monk; and I bring this obscure yet edifying writer into comparison with the profound author of the "Phædo," and the "Phædrus," and the "Apology." As to intellectuality—immeasurable is the space intervening between the pious Macarius and the illustrious disciple of Socrates. Nevertheless this interval is not greater than that which measures the distance which the human mind and the modern civilisation have passed on, under the teaching of Christ, beyond the position it

had reached under the teaching of Plato. It is not merely that the Egyptian monk had come fully into the knowledge of axioms and first principles in theology which the disciple of Socrates spent his life in groping after, and yet never attained. This would be only a formal statement of the fact before us. The Copt* had come to know that GOD, the Creator of the World, is One—and that He is One in His moral attributes, and that He is just, and good, and gracious, even as a Father toward His children. This conception was of a sort that is altogether strange to Greek Philosophy. In the entire range of classic antiquity, no thoughts, or any correspondent sentiments of *this* order come to the surface. "He that sat upon the throne" had in *this* sense made all things new, namely, that the human mind had received a new bent—a bent GODWARD; and thenceforward, and throughout all time, it is held to be true that there *is* a life of the soul toward God. God is not henceforward to be thought of only as an object in philosophy, or as an axiom in metaphysics, but is to be regarded as the Infinite Being with whom man is invited to hold communion—even

* Whether the Homilies and Treatises which I now hold in my hand should be attributed to Macarius *Senior*, or to Macarius *Junior*, or even to some other writer of about the same period, is a matter of no consequence whatever in relation to the bearing of such a question upon any inference I am intending to draw from my facts.

a daily correspondence. Christian antiquity on the one side, and the brightest products of pagan antiquity on the other side, then the difference is a disparity immeasurable: with whomsoever *this* knowledge of God gets an entrance, all things have indeed become new.

Nor is it merely that the immortality which pagan philosophy surmised, had now become an undoubted truth—an axiom of the Christian life; but this doctrine, which had floated as a mist in the view of the loftiest minds of antiquity, had at length so fixed itself in the vivid conceptions of the entire mass of Christian people, men, women, and children, that these, and any of them, were ready to stake life and all things upon it.

"Behold, I make all things new,"—then, are we to ask what things they are, and on what scene of action this "new creation" is to be effected? Was it from the wilds of savage life, and with the few and the rude elements of that low order of social organization? If it were so, a renovation of this kind, and a taming of the ferocious man, and a humanising of one so brutal, it would be indeed a marvel; wonderful indeed it is when, under the tutelage of the Christian teacher, this new creation does take place. Nevertheless, it must be accounted an event of a higher order—an event worthy of more profound regard, when races that have held on their way for centuries in a condition of the most elaborate civilization, including the highest culture, when such as these are brought over from one condition,

intellectual and moral, to another condition, intellectual and moral. A new creation of *this* kind is indeed amazing. Yet it was a revolution not less signal than this that took place when the ancient civilization yielded itself to a new and a hitherto unthought-of moral and religious system—a new belief—a new ethics—a new code of social and political organization. In the track of time, the revolutions of which I find to be reported and vouched for in the books that occupy the shelves around me, these changes—great as they were—were actually brought about. These revolutions affected the human system to its very depths, and upon its surface also, and they took their course in the East, and in the West, and in every land around the Mediterranean. Slowly in some quarters, very rapidly in other quarters, but at length in all provinces of the Roman world, and in every city, and wherever any social polity, and wherever schools and the usages of refined modes of life had already gone in advance of it, there did this Christianity come, and come with power: and in the lapse of time it ousted its rivals, and it cleared a ground for itself, and put to silence the gainsaying of heathenism, and brought under its sway, and into its service, the languages, and the discipline, and the manners, and the morals, and the politics, and the imperial government itself. In all this manifold revolution there is a verification at large of that word of power—"He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

So it is, then, that the books of which I have spoken in this paper give their various evidence concerning an EFFECT, vast in its *measurement*, and quite unexampled in its *quality*. And now, when we make inquiry concerning the spring or CAUSE of so great a revolution, we find that the cause alleged is adequate to the effect; and, moreover, that the cause and the effect are in congruity, the one with the other. It was Omnipotence—it was He that sat upon the throne that said: Behold, I make all things new. The effect vouches for the cause: the cause is justified in the effect.

At this point, where I am coming to the close of this informal meditation, I come to what might be taken as the text of another meditation, or of a new argument. I have spoken above of the *Drift of Thought* at the present moment. The purport of this now-present tendency is toward the acceptance of a Christianity—abated—a Gospel, shorn of its forces; and we are labouring to persuade ourselves that a Gospel so abated shall serve us instead of, and better than, the Gospel such as we have it in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. All we need, it is said, in this advanced stage of European civilization is—*an amiable Ethics*, and an easy after-life in prospect, with no terrors appended.

The compromise which is now pleaded for must embrace such things as these:—The exclusion of "dogmas" of all sorts—a declared indifference toward

"speculative belief"—a rejection of superstitions, the devil included. Yet most of all is demanded the rejection of that one doctrine which, more than any other article of the obsolete theology, offends our modern philosophy, and outrages its sensibilities; we therefore insist upon the utter removal of the ancient belief concerning the vicarious death of Christ. On *these* terms a continuance may be granted to Christianity.

To abate the *forces* of the Gospel might seem a practicable enterprise, if this indeed were all; but it is certain that when these forces, these *powers* of the system, are removed, what remains is reduced to a mass of incoherent and intolerable solecisms. Often has this experiment been repeated, and always with the same result. Other than such as it is—powerful to shake the Babel of human pride—powerful to vanquish the obduracy of our alienation from God, the Gospel quickly gives place to any illusion—philosophical, or literary, or sensual—which may suit the bent of each mind. If proof of these averments is asked for, then it is certain that everything which illustrates the history of the human mind, when brought into collision with the Gospel, is available to that end, and will consist with no other conclusion.

THE LATE ISAAC TAYLOR.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE foregoing essay, which appeared in *Good Words* at the close of the year 1864, was almost the last literary effort of one who for fifty years had held, in his well-practised hand, that Family Pen of which he writes.

In the spring of the year 1865, he was attacked by a violent access of the chronic bronchitis which had long troubled him, and this malady was soon complicated by dropsical symptoms. For three months he endured great sufferings with characteristic fortitude and Christian patience, till at last the strong frame was shattered, and, on the 28th of June, he passed away to his well-earned rest. Born at Lavenham, on the 17th of August, 1787, just before the breaking out of the great French Revolution, he would in a few weeks have completed his seventy-eighth year.

This is not the place for any lengthened Memoir, or for any estimate of the services which his words of thoughtful wisdom have rendered to the cause of Christian truth. Some such memorial of his literary labours,

based upon his own letters, and accompanied by selections from MSS. which he has left behind, is now in preparation. It has been thought, however, that these volumes would be incomplete if they did not contain some briefest record of the literary life of one who grasped the Family Pen with such firm fingers, and wielded it to so good effect.

The narrative of his early life, and the account of the surroundings of his youthful years, will be found, to a great extent, detailed by himself, incidentally, in the Memoir of his sister, Jane Taylor, which occupies the concluding portion of this volume. In those pages will be found a vivid description of the secluded life led by the family at Lavenham, with an account of their removal to Colchester, and finally to Ongar, together with a record of the long sojourn with his sister in Devonshire and Cornwall.

In common with several other members of the family, Isaac Taylor was trained to the profession of an artist. Though gifted with a keen perception of artistic excellence, with a striking originality of thought, and no inconsiderable power of artistic expression, yet the more mechanical details of his profession were distasteful to his mind, and he soon abandoned these pursuits for the more congenial labours of stated authorship.

I believe that his earliest ventures with the pen were published, in conjunction with his sisters, in some of those books for children which have enjoyed such an

extensive popularity. A suitable place has been found for one or more of these juvenile productions in the second volume of this work.

But his literary tastes and pursuits were soon to receive an entirely new direction. The accidental discovery of a copy of the works of Sulpicius Severus on a London bookstall, as narrated by himself, in the preceding paper, turned his attention to the problems presented by the History and Corruptions of the Christian Church, and led to the gradual accumulation of a library containing everything worthy of note in the whole range of patristic literature. A somewhat similar acquisition of a copy of Lord Bacon's treatises *De Augmentis*, which occurred about the same time, gave another direction to his studies. He became an enthusiastic admirer and student of the works of the great founder of our intellectual philosophy, and in the combination of these two lines of study, seemingly so incongruent—the Baconian and the patristic—may, I believe, be found the key to his whole literary life.

About the year 1818, his friend, Josiah Conder, who was at that time the Editor of the *Eclectic Review*, induced him to become a stated contributor to that periodical, which was then at the zenith of its fame, numbering as it did among its most zealous literary supporters the names of Robert Hall, John Foster, and Olinthus Gregory.

In 1822, at the age of thirty-five, he made his first

independent literary venture. This was a small educational volume, which had been suggested mainly by his Baconian studies, and was entitled "Elements of Thought." It was intended to teach the first rudiments of mental philosophy. The volume was not unsuccessful, having passed through several editions in its original form; and a few years before the author's death it was entirely recast and published as an essentially new work, under the title of "The World of Mind." This first essay was succeeded by a much larger and more costly volume, a new translation of the "Characters of Theophrastus," accompanied by pictorial renderings of the characters, drawn and etched by the translator. But the great event of this period was the lamented death of his sister Jane, who had, for many years, been the chief sharer of his thoughts, and the chosen companion of his leisure hours. As her literary executor, all other pursuits were put aside, in order that he might devote himself to the melancholy task of the preparation of a memoir, which, accompanied by selections from her correspondence and literary remains, was first published in the year 1825. It is this memoir which, recast and revised a year or two before his death, constitutes the greater portion of the present volume.

In the ensuing year he married Elizabeth, second daughter of James Medland, Esq. of Newington. This lady was the "young friend" of his sister Jane, to whom are addressed many of the letters in the latter part of

her published correspondence. During the thirty-five years of her married life she proved herself a true and noble woman, a devoted wife, a fond yet most judicious mother, and the beloved friend and counsellor of her cottage neighbours.

In preparation for his marriage, Mr. Taylor had established himself at Stanford Rivers, a secluded country village, distant some two miles from his father's residence at Ongar. This house at Stanford Rivers, which was to be the scene of his literary labours, and of his silent meditations for more than forty years, was not unfitted for the retreat of a literary recluse. It was a rambling old-fashioned farmhouse, standing in a large garden. It commanded a somewhat extensive view of the numerous shaws, the well-timbered hedge-rows, and the undulating pasturages, which are characteristic of that part of Essex; while at a distance of some half-mile from the house the little river Roden meanders through the broad meadows. The house was speedily adapted to its new purposes; barns, and other farm outbuildings, were pulled down, the garden was replanted and laid out afresh, with a characteristic provision of spacious gravel-walks for meditative purposes.

Shortly after his marriage he published two companion volumes, which mark the direction which his studies had been taking. The first, "The History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times," was followed by "The Process of Historical Proof." These

books form an answer to what may be called the Literary Scepticism of writers like the Jesuit Hardouin and his school, and show the grounds on which a rigorous criticism may accept as genuine the various remains of Ancient Literature, and more especially those documents which are comprised in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. After an interval of more than thirty years, these two volumes were recast by their author, and re-published as a single work.

The researches connected with a new and annotated Translation of Herodotus, which Mr. Taylor published at this time, seem to have suggested an anonymous work of fiction, entitled "The Temple of Melekartha." This work, the authorship of which was never avowed, stands alone among the productions of its writer. With great imaginative and pictorial power, it attempts to reproduce the characteristic features of the pre-historic civilization of the Tyrian race at the period of the traditional migration from the Persian Gulf to the Syrian coast. The work is pervaded by a deep ethical purpose, striving, as it does, to develop the untrammelled workings of enthusiasm, fanaticism, and spiritual despotism, and their baneful results on the destinies of nations.

Hitherto, Mr. Taylor, as an author, had been only moderately successful. His works, though well received by the public, had excited no marked sensation. But at last, at the age of forty-two, he discovered the direction in which the true bent of his genius lay. The

"Natural History of Enthusiasm" was published anonymously in the month of May 1829. This work, with which the author's name is perhaps now chiefly associated, was a sort of a historico-philosophical elucidation of those social and religious problems which had come into prominence in that age of political and ecclesiastical revolution. It was written with such freshness of thought and vigour of language, as at once to place the unknown writer in the front rank of contemporary literature. The book rapidly ran through eight or nine editions, and still continues to have its readers and admirers. It was rapidly followed by two companion volumes,—"Fanaticism," and "Spiritual Despotism," which were eagerly welcomed by an expectant and admiring public.

Mr. Taylor's next work is, perhaps, that which has been most in favour with the class of readers to whose tastes his writings are adapted. In his character of a lay theologian, he brought forward a series of devout reflections and original speculations on some of the more recondite subjects of religious thought. As a layman, he thought it right to leave the ordinary topics of the pulpit to their authorized expounders, and, under the title of "Saturday Evening," he claimed to deal only with such matters as might be regarded as a preparation for the more formal teaching of the Sunday. This work has been regarded by a numerous band of admirers as a storehouse of profound thought, expressed in that massive

and harmonious language of which the writer was a master.

One of the detached speculations in "Saturday Evening" was soon afterwards expanded into a volume, under the title of "The Physical Theory of another Life." This work has gone through several editions, and still finds numerous readers.

The time now came at which Mr. Taylor was reluctantly persuaded to relinquish that anonymous shield under cover of which this series of works had been produced, and which in his own opinion enabled him to write with a freedom and a power to which he had before been a stranger. In 1836, a vacancy occurred in the chair of Logic in the University of Edinburgh. The anonymous author received an urgent requisition from some of the electors to stand for the vacant chair. This flattering proposal, involving as it did a surrender of his cherished habits of seclusion, was at first decisively declined, but the request was repeated with such urgency that he was at last induced to reconsider his determination. As the day of election approached all the other competitors withdrew, with the exception of Sir William Hamilton, who was ultimately successful by a small majority. This contest, the issue of which the defeated candidate never regretted for a moment, laid the foundation of valued friendships with Dr. Chalmers, and other prominent men in Edinburgh, who had warmly interested themselves on his behalf. Another result of this contest

was that, on several occasions in after years, Mr. Taylor received similar invitations to compete for chairs in Scotch universities and colleges, and on one occasion a prominent position of the kind was placed at his option. But he never again consented to stand, believing that a College teacher should have received a College training, and believing also that his own habits of thought, and of free utterance on philosophical and theological topics, would not have been in harmony with the intellectual atmosphere of a Scotch university.

His own marked enjoyment of the country, and his decisive preference for a secluded life, joined to his conviction of the superior mental and physical health attainable by a family residing in the country, combined to retain him in the retired rural home in which he had deliberately chosen to cast his lot. At this time he had seven young children around his table. The methods which he pursued, and the thoughts which suggested themselves in superintending the education of his own family, are recorded in "Home Education," a volume published in 1838. The beneficial influences of a country life, the educational value of children's pleasures, and the importance of favouring the natural growth of a child's mind instead of stimulating the mental powers into a forced and unnatural activity, are among the topics insisted upon in this volume, which has had considerable weight with parents in

inducing them to promote the enjoyments of their children as one of the best of educational influences.

His next effort was of a very different character, and involved him in literary controversy of a kind from which his retiring nature sensitively shrank. In the preceding pages he has himself narrated the effect produced upon his mind in early life by the chance discovery on a London bookstall of a copy of Sulpicius Severus. The interest thus awakened in patristic literature was not allowed to die away. He gradually accumulated on his shelves a costly array of folios comprising nearly everything of note in the literature of Christian antiquity. From the independent perusal of these writers he had formed for himself a conception of the doctrine and practice of the Nicene Church differing widely from that which he found presented in any of the then accepted writers on Church history. Milner, and even Mosheim, he put from him with a kind of indignation, as giving an entirely distorted version of the facts of the case.

Holding as he did this belief as to the practices and doctrines of the early Church, he was deeply interested in that great movement in the English Church of which the "Tracts for the Times" were the exponents. The avowed object of the tracts was to bring back the Church of England to the theological beliefs and the ritual usages of the Nicene Church. Mr. Taylor's re-

searches had led him to the belief that almost the whole of the errors of mediæval Rome existed in a more or less developed form in that church of the fourth century which the Oxford writers were holding up to view as the standard and pattern for ourselves. In this belief he stepped forward with a reply to the Tracts, from the point of view of a layman, unembarrassed by the entanglement of ecclesiastical interests or subscriptions.

The first part of "Ancient Christianity compared with the Doctrines of the 'Tracts for the Times'" appeared in the beginning of the year 1839, and drew down upon its author an unwonted storm of virulent and unscrupulous opposition. The parts continued to appear at intervals for nearly three years, and had a very extensive circulation. The author had reason to believe that, while he had confirmed many waverers in their old allegiance to the Church of England, he had succeeded in proving to others that their only consistent course was to join the communion of Rome.

About this time Mr. Taylor delivered four lectures on "Spiritual Christianity" to a distinguished audience assembled at the Hanover Square Rooms. He himself always regarded these lectures as one of his happiest efforts. A somewhat similar course of Four Lectures was addressed to the working classes, under the title, "Man Responsible."

But occupations of a very different nature now began to engross his thoughts. From his boyhood his leisure

hours had been much occupied with the invention of mechanical devices. One room in his house was always appropriated as a laboratory and carpenter's shop. At a very early period of his life he had invented the beer-tap which is now most commonly employed throughout the country; and somewhat later he contrived and introduced a very effective grate for domestic use. But his most ingenious contrivance was a machine for engraving upon copper. This beautiful invention was applied to the production of the numerous plates which illustrate Dr. Traill's translation of Josephus, and shortly afterwards it was adapted to the purpose of engraving the copper cylinders which are employed in calico printing; and having been patented in England, Scotland, and America, it was brought into operation on a large scale in Manchester and elsewhere. This machinery, ingenious and mechanically successful as it was, proved, financially, most disastrous to the inventor, and involved him in heavy liabilities, from which he only escaped in the latter years of his life. As has so often been the case, the invention, though ruinous to the inventor, realized large returns in the hands of others who possessed the requisite capital for making it commercially successful.

These mechanical pursuits were the main occupation of the seven years which followed the completion of "Ancient Christianity." The hours which were not devoted to bringing the engraving machinery to per-

fection were spent in literary labour, though not of that independent kind which had hitherto engaged him. He contributed at intervals many thoughtful articles to the *North British Review*, from the time of its first commencement in 1843, and expended much heavy and well-nigh fruitless toil in editing Dr. Traill's translation of Josephus, and writing the historical and topographical notes which accompany that work.

In 1849 he again published a volume, "Loyola and Jesuitism," in which he endeavoured to apply to one special epoch of Church History those general principles which had been propounded just twenty years before, in the "Natural History of Enthusiasm." A companion monograph, "Wesley and Methodism," appeared some two years later. These two volumes, however, excited less attention than preceding works from their author's pen. Wanting, as he constitutionally was, in literary ambition, he now gladly availed himself of an opportunity of returning to the privacy of anonymous authorship, which, he felt, always enabled him to wield his pen with a freedom and power which he was sensible had been more or less wanting ever since that reluctant avowal of his name which had been extorted from him in 1836. The result fully justified this belief, and "The Restoration of Belief," a volume on the Christian argument which was published anonymously at Cambridge in 1855, has always been regarded by his admirers as one of the most profound and powerful of all the efforts of his pen.

The works of his remaining years may be briefly enumerated. "Logic in Theology," and "Ultimate Civilization," are the titles of two volumes of characteristic essays. The concluding essay in the former of these volumes is a sort of *Religio Laici*, and contains a more detailed expression of the writer's mature belief than can be found elsewhere. In this essay he sums up the *credenda* which a thoughtful and devout man may, in these days of scepticism, accept as things which may be believed "without controversy." In truth, as he advanced in life, his early aversion to the acrimony and necessary one-sidedness of religious controversy returned with augmented force, and he often regretted that the feebleness of increasing years did not allow him to recast the one controversial effort of his life—"Ancient Christianity"—into a form which should be free from that atmosphere of partisanship in which it was, from the necessity of the time, originally produced.

Mr. Taylor's last work of any importance was a volume of lectures, originally delivered at Edinburgh, on "The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry." This volume was published in 1862, and it contains passages of great originality and beauty, showing that age had not abated the powers of the veteran writer, though it may have mellowed his tone of thought, and chastened his somewhat exuberant style. The last fruit of his pen was the series of "Personal Recollections," which appeared in *Good Words* a few months before his death. It is one of the essays

in that series, bearing the title of "The Family Pen," which is reprinted in the present volume. At the time of his fatal seizure in the spring of 1865, he was engaged in writing an essay on the religious history of England during the fifty years of his own literary life. This fragment is now being prepared for publication, and it is hoped will very shortly be given to the world.

Mr. Taylor was singularly destitute of literary ambition. It was always his greatest pleasure and reward to believe that in his employment of the gift entrusted to him he had been able in any degree to be useful in his generation. It is not often perhaps that so voluminous a writer has shrunk so persistently from personal prominence and literary notoriety of every kind. It was always most painful to him to be brought forward as "a literary man." He resolutely held aloof from mixing in literary circles; general society was distasteful to him; and though he hospitably welcomed, at Stanford Rivers, his few chosen friends, yet he was never truly happy and at ease save in the deep seclusion of his country retreat, pacing up and down the walks of the old-fashioned garden, or setting forth for prolonged rambles in those retired lanes and byways where he could feel most secure from encountering strangers. His social enjoyments he ever sought in the bosom of his own family. He always believed that the domestic happiness with which he was so greatly favoured was not only a strong stimulus to literary

exertion, but exercised also the best influence on his own intellectual judgments; and to the seclusion of his country life he attributed much of the breadth and catholicity of his religious feelings, and the calm judicial tone of his literary temper.

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF JANE TAYLOR.

BY HER BROTHER, THE LATE ISAAC TAYLOR.

INTRODUCTION.

FORTY years have elapsed since the first publication of these Memoirs. This is an interval of time within which many names, which were deservedly conspicuous in their day, have subsided into almost absolute oblivion; but no empty boast is implied when the simple fact is affirmed that JANE TAYLOR'S name, and her literary repute, within her proper field, still survive; and that her influence within that field has undergone little diminution.

As to a large portion of the beneficial influence of her writings, it has outlasted even a sixty years, during which time very many works of the same class, and some of them of great merit, have appeared, and which, it might have been thought, would have driven the authors of "Original Poems" and "Hymns for Infant Minds,"

from their ground. But this substitution of the new for the old in this department has not taken place. As to Jane Taylor's later writings, they still maintain their position, and are sought after and read with zest by some who are the grand-daughters of those whom, sixty years ago, she addressed as "My young readers." There is ground therefore for the belief that the many who still cherish Jane Taylor's memory with affection, and who commend her writings to their children, will receive with favour a republication in a collected form of the more permanent portion of her works, headed by a memoir, which, although it has already appeared in print, is now enlarged by the addition of much new material hitherto unedited.

In bringing forward this Memoir in its present form, and with its new materials, I find myself much less restrained than when addressing myself to my task, as my sister's biographer, some forty years ago. This difference of feeling results in part, as a natural consequence, from the habitude of appearing before the public as an author, dispelling, as it does, the shyness and diffidence that attend the early years of a literary course. But more than this, the lapse of so many years has put out of sight many of those motives of reserve which must be in force so long as the contemporaries and the nearest connexions of the deceased may actually be the readers of a biography. The time that has gone by since my sister's death has reduced

the list of her surviving contemporaries to a very few names; and of these few, perhaps not one will actually be a reader of what now is written.

Not only therefore may more liberty be used on my part in describing and narrating the scenes and incidents of my sister's personal history, but a liberty of selection also from her correspondence and manuscripts may be allowable, which, at the first, was forbidden me on many grounds.

Of this liberty, however, I shall not avail myself to an undue extent. It is a mistake often made by biographers to imagine that the ordinary incidents of an ordinary course of life acquire importance from their connexion with a name that has long stood in a favourable light before the public. This misjudgment has had an effect fatal to literary reputations, which have been submerged hopelessly under the weight of two, three, four, or more volumes. With only one volume on his head, the victim of the fond prejudice of a biographer might long have held himself afloat.

CHAPTER I.

JANE TAYLOR'S PARENTAGE AND EARLY YEARS AT LAVENHAM.

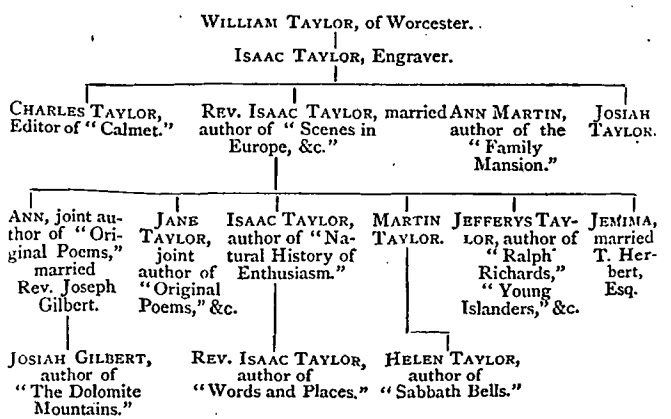
THE ordinary incidents of an ordinary lot may be worth the relating when they are of a kind that are characteristic of a gone-by era, and when they serve to give vividness to our conceptions of the doings and the fashions of such an era—a time seventy, eighty years ago, and of which few vivid recollections are extant. As to some brief statements of parentage and pedigree, they may properly be admitted in a Memoir, if it were only as authentic contradictions of the frequent misstatements which find their way into biographical compilations. Writers who furnish hastily-written articles relating to the living, or to the recently deceased, ought surely to take more pains in ascertaining facts than appears to have been used in some such compilations.

Along with a taste and a feeling peculiarly her own, JANE TAYLOR had her share of a constitutional energy and a power of achievement which had distinguished several of the seniors of the family, as well on the paternal as on the maternal side.*

* Some sort of genealogical table, indicating the relationship of those who have in succession held in their hands the FAMILY

ISAAC TAYLOR, the grandfather of Jane Taylor, was the son of WILLIAM TAYLOR of Worcester. Early in the last century, this Isaac Taylor, first of four who in lineal succession have borne that name, came up to London from Worcester, while still a youth, fired with the ambition of distinguishing himself as an artist. In London he obtained instruction in the newly imported "mystery" of copper-plate engraving, as practised by those Italian and French artists whose names are familiar to the collectors of prints. He soon won for himself a reputable place among the English artists who were then labouring to naturalize the fine arts in this country, and who at length fully succeeded in doing so: for they, and their sons and pupils, brought line engraving to a pitch of excellence that may allow them to

PEN, may perhaps serve to make the succeeding narrative more intelligible.


WILLIAM TAYLOR, of Worcester.
ISAAC TAYLOR, Engraver.
CHARLES TAYLOR, Editor of "Calmet."
REV. ISAAC TAYLOR, author of "Scenes in Europe, &c."
married ANN MARTIN, author of the "Family Mansion."
JOSIAH TAYLOR.
ANN, joint author of "Original Poems," married Rev. Joseph Gilbert.
JANE TAYLOR, joint author of "Original Poems," &c.
ISAAC TAYLOR, author of "Natural History of Enthusiasm."
MARTIN TAYLOR.
JEFFERYS TAYLOR, author of "Ralph Richards," "Young Islanders," &c.
JEMIMA, married T. Herbert, Esq.
JOSIAH GILBERT, author of "The Dolomite Mountains."
REV. ISAAC TAYLOR, author of "Words and Places."
HELEN TAYLOR, author of "Sabbath Bells."

challenge comparison with the artists of Germany, Italy, or France. ISAAC TAYLOR, then rising in his profession, married early in life, Sarah, daughter of Josiah Jefferys, of Shenfeld, Essex, and of Jane Hawkshaw, his wife; and it was at Shenfeld that the infant family was reared, while the father pursued his career in London.

The three sons of this family were CHARLES, who won a deservedly high reputation as the learned Editor of Calmet's "Dictionary of the Bible;" ISAAC, the father of Anne and Jane; and JOSIAH, who became eminent as a publisher of architectural works, and who gave substantial evidence of unusual ability and energy by amassing a large fortune. ISAAC, the second son, received a regular education as an engraver, and in fact at a very early period of his course he far surpassed his father in every artistic quality, and at length took a prominent position in the execution of that series of great artistic works of which the Boydells were the originators. Isaac Taylor's engravings after Opie, Northcote, Stothard, Smirke, and others, compare well with any works of the same order and period.

A circumstance which had great influence in after years upon Jane's education, as well as upon that of the other members of the family, may here properly be mentioned; remote as may seem its bearing upon the intellectual training of a girl in her teens. Between the years 1778 and 1785, "Chambers' Cyclopædia" was sent to press for the sixth (or seventh) edition, in folio,

and was copiously illustrated with engravings. Isaac Taylor, the elder, had been engaged to execute these plates; which included scientific subjects of all kinds; and his name accordingly appears at the corner of every plate in the series—more than two hundred in number. Isaac Taylor, his second son, the father of Jane Taylor, who was then in his apprenticeship, had already acquired much various information, as well as skill, in his profession. To him, in fact, was committed the actual execution of these plates. The work was edited by Dr. Abraham Rees, who some years afterwards put forth an Encyclopædia, in quarto, which bears his name. My father, as being in fact the artist responsible for the due execution of the plates, consequently came into almost daily communication with this accomplished and amiable man, who welcomed the young engraver to his study—gave him access to scientific books, and by many a gratuitous instruction, promoted his personal improvement. In this manner, and while executing his task with scrupulous care, and much ability, the engraver became —as he continued to be through life—much more than an artist:—he was a man of varied acquirements, and of extensive acquaintedness with matters of science. When at a later period, he found himself the father of a numerous family, he set himself to work, with prodigious and never-wearied industry, to systematize his various knowledge, and, in many ingenious modes, to adapt it to the business of education. It was a rudimentary instruction, thus wide

in its circuit, and well ordered in its forms, that Jane, with her brothers and sisters, received in their home education. But we now go back to the years of her infancy at Lavenham.

JANE, the second daughter, was born September 23rd, 1783, while her parents resided in London. From her birth, and during the first two years of her life, her constitution seemed so delicate, and her health so precarious, that it was scarcely expected she would survive the critical period of infancy. But happily, before she had completed her third year, her father removed with his family into the country, and from that period she appeared to take a new possession of life; and soon acquired the bloom and vivacity of perfect health.

In several instances, in the course of the ensuing narrative, I shall avail myself of passages occurring in my mother's papers, in which she refers to circumstances and events attaching to her daughter's early life. It is thus that she speaks of her early experiences as a mother :—

"On account of business, it had seemed advisable on the whole, that we should remove to London (from Islington), and, after having inhabited our little mansion only fifteen months, thither we removed to apartments in Red Lion Street, Holborn, at Midsummer, 1783; and on the 23rd September following, a little before midnight, was born our *dear Jane*—now no more.*

* Written in 1825.

From the negligence of the attendants she caught cold at the moment of her birth, and this entailed a weakness on her constitution, from which she never recovered, and which was probably the remote cause of a premature death.

"And now, as a wife and a mother, I felt the duties of those important relations excite all my energies, and engross all my thoughts. What was, on the whole, the best *regimen* for my children, with all the *pros* and *cons* which I could muster from books or other sources, underwent the most laborious investigation. Our medical attendant, however, judiciously hinted to me, that children might even be injured by over-much care, and cautioned me against trying a variety of experiments with them, as nature dictated the most simple process."

The anxious mother sought advice from friends, of whom some were as forward to afford it, as she was ready to listen to it. These friendly admonitions extended sometimes beyond what had been asked concerning the treatment of her infants—as thus :—

"Here, again, I must acknowledge my obligation to the same friend who had interfered respecting the children's food. She was one of those who assume the privilege of administering reproof, and of speaking their sentiments upon all occasions, without respect of persons; nor could she have selected an individual better adapted than myself, to bear with patience, and to profit, by the home-strokes which she was thus in the

habit of dealing about in all directions. 'Your husband,' said she, 'may have got a housekeeper, and a nurse for his children, but I am sure he has no companion; it will be well, if in due time he does not grow tired of you. The affections of a man of taste cannot fix permanently on a mere plod, and you are certainly nothing better!' The homely truth darted into my mind, and carried conviction with the rapidity of a flash of lightning. Already my husband had begun to read to himself at breakfast and tea-time, and thus far social converse was at a stand. But what was to be done? I had not a moment's time to spare from those *plodding* duties with which I had been charged by my friend, for I could not afford, like her, to keep two servants. I viewed the matter in all its bearings, and saw the impending danger without any apparent means of averting it. At length—This will I do, thought I. I will propose to read to him at breakfast and tea-time, by which means I may at once revive my own dormant taste, cultivate a mind now rapidly degenerating to its former state of ignorance, divert myself from those harassing cares which beset me on every side; and thus subjects may be brought before us, on which we can converse with mutual advantage. My proposal was cordially received, and the plan instantly adopted. But the children—what was to be done with the children? For, alas! there was no nursery! Nothing at all was done with them. They quickly acquired the habit of sitting

quietly during the time, without any apparent uneasiness from the restraint. Thus commenced a custom of more than forty years' duration, with very partial interruptions, and which may fairly be recorded as one of the important events of my life. It has rescued a mind from inanity, which was rapidly degenerating, and losing the few attainments it had acquired; it has beguiled many a care, and diverted many a pain, even affording energy to weakness and languor, which, in most cases, would have been deemed insurmountable obstacles to such a custom. Besides this, must be taken into account the incalculable benefit arising to the children of the family, from the volumes they have thus heard read, in addition to their own individual reading. It is scarcely conceivable at what an early age they thus obtained gleanings of knowledge, from subjects becoming familiar to them, of which they must otherwise have remained ignorant till the regular process of education had directed attention to them. In a word, this custom has proved one of the prominent blessings of our lives."

His engagements as an artist being such as allowed him to reside at a distance from London, Mr. Taylor gladly availed himself of this liberty to establish his family in a place where the same expenditure would procure a much larger amount of comfort than in London; and where health, and all the best enjoyments of life, were much more likely to be secured. It was in

the summer of the year 1786 that the family removed to the village of Lavenham, in Suffolk. Ann, the eldest child, was then in the fifth, and Jane in the third year of her age; and they were, therefore, able to enjoy, with their parents, the simple pleasures and extended comforts of their new habitation. Accustomed as she had been to the narrow bounds and the many restraints of a London house, Jane's spirits broke forth with unusual emotions of pleasure amid the ample space, and the agreeable objects that now surrounded her.

My mother thus speaks of the removal to Lavenham :—

"And so after a toilsome and anxious journey, wandering about among strangers, hospitable and inhospitable, from place to place; my husband hired at length a house at Lavenham, in Suffolk, sixty miles from London: its owner, a clergyman, having just quitted it. It was a handsome dwelling, with a spacious garden, well stocked with fruit, and, owing to its retired situation, and its distance from the high road, the rent was no more than £6 *per annum;* an advantageous diminution from £20, which we had paid in London. And while provisions were cheap in equal proportion, our superior wisdom above that of our friends was too demonstrable, not to strike us at the first glance."

Jane's mother had felt in the keenest manner the separation from her family and her London friends: and she had resigned herself to this removal into the

country as to a calamity inevitable. After speaking of the painful parting at the last, she says :—

"On the same evening, Friday, June 30th, 1786, we arrived at our new habitation; had I been told when living at home, that I should ever have taken up my abode in such a mansion, and view it, not only with indifference, but with disgust, I should have discredited the prediction. But what can external objects effect in banishing the sorrows of the mind? It seemed an ungracious return for my dear husband's exertion, in doing all that affection could suggest to welcome me to my new abode, and render it agreeable; but against this sort of trial no consideration could ever render me proof."

Very soon after her removal to the country, Jane displayed, not merely a healthy vivacity and child-like eagerness in the amusements provided for her by her parents, but an uncommon fertility of imagination in creating pleasures for herself. It was evident to those who observed her, that, even from her third or fourth year, the child inhabited a fairy land, and was perpetually occupied with the imaginary interests of her teeming fancy. "I can remember," says her sister, "that Jane was always the saucy, lively, entertaining little thing—the amusement and the favourite of all that knew her. At the baker's shop she used to be placed on the kneading-board, in order to recite, preach, narrate—to the great entertainment of his

many visitors; and at Mr. Blackadder's she was the life and fun of the farmer's hearth. Her plays, from the earliest that I can recollect, were deeply imaginative, and I think that in 'Moll and Bet,' 'The Miss Parks,' 'The Miss Sisters,' 'The Miss Bandboxes,' and 'Aunt and Niece,' which I believe is the entire catalogue of them, she lived in a world wholly of her own creation, with as deep a feeling of reality as life itself could afford. These amusements lasted from the age of three or four, till ten or twelve. About the latter time her favourite employment in playtime was whipping a top, during the successful spinning of which she composed tales and dramas, some of which she afterwards committed to paper. She would spend hours in this kind of reverie, in the large unfurnished parlour at our house at Lavenham. But I think I may say that the retiring character of her mind, a morbid sensibility towards things and persons *without*, as well as much refined feeling, operated to prevent a *due* estimate of her talents being formed, till much later in life. I need not tell you, that they were never made a show of to anybody. But timid as she was in and about herself, she had the courage of enterprise in the service of those she loved;—she was, you know, the presenter of every petition for holidays and special favours, and the spirited *foremost* in every youthful plan."

This early activity of the imagination Jane afterwards

lamented. "I do believe," she says, "that this habit of *castle-building* is very injurious to the mind. I know I have sometimes lived so much in a *castle*, as almost to forget that I lived in a *house*." Had she continued in London, it is probable that, with the dim impressions of a sickly frame, and the sombre dulness of surrounding objects, the imagination would have continued in its germ till it had been quickened by the feverish excitements of riper years. But there is a better hope for the character when this faculty expands during the innocence of infancy, and amid the fair scenes of nature; for these first impressions preoccupy the fancy, and give a lasting direction to the tastes.

The house occupied by Mr. Taylor at Lavenham, was situated in a street of detached dwellings, of a humbler class than itself, at the outskirts of the town. These cottages were inhabited chiefly by the poor who were employed in the woollen manufacture, which at that time still lingered in this neighbourhood, where it had formerly greatly flourished. The scene which this street exhibited on a summer's day, seventy years ago, is now hardly anywhere to be observed. The spinning-wheel was planted on the foot-way before every cottage door, and the females of each family wrought in groups, young and old together. Perhaps it ought not to be much regretted that industry has ceased to be *picturesque;* and the political economist will aver that not only

the organization of labour has vastly increased production, but that the necessaries, and even the luxuries of life, are far more abundantly accessible to those who spend their days in close ranks around the steam-engine.

The house at Lavenham was sufficiently spacious to afford apartments in which the children might be left to their amusements without restraint. A pleasant, and rather extensive garden adjoined the house; it was open towards the country, and a long and wide grass walk, traversing its whole length, was terminated at the upper end by an arbour, in the old fashioned style, and at the other by a ha-ha; beyond which were pastures, a rugged common, and more distant cornfields. In this garden the sisters were, at a very early age, companions in song; and they were wont, before the eldest was six years old, to pace up and down the green walks, hand in hand, lisping a simple couplet of their joint composition.

My mother thus speaks of her methods of training in the earliest stages of education:—

"By this time our two little girls, Ann and Jane, had attained that age when the work of education must commence; a task, it must be confessed, in which we had more zeal than knowledge. What I had witnessed at home from the injudicious indulgence of my brothers and sisters, determined me, if ever I became a mother, to adopt a different plan, and made me resolve, on the

other hand, that my children should never suffer under the oppression which had so afflicted my own childhood and youth. My husband, too, had been trained under the boasted system of 'a word and a blow, and the blow first;' so that we had not the advantages of example to assist us in our new and important undertaking. . . . . .

"And here, if we might be allowed to claim any merit, the ardour, the zeal, and the affection with which we commenced our new duties to our infant charges may be mentioned. Their dear father found his utmost energies necessary for the support of his family; nevertheless he as zealously entered into his department of their education as though it had been his sole employment. My own health was at this time considerably undermined; and many unavoidable chasms ensued in my operations, in consequence of nearly annual confinements; our first six children having been born in little more than seven years; but neither these hindrances, nor indispensable household affairs, prevented me from devoting a large portion of my time to my darling object. I kept, when not confined to my chamber, regular school hours; and when occupied in domestic affairs, my girls, whenever it was possible, have been at my side, and by the questions I encouraged them to ask, their minds were stored with such knowledge as my yet scanty stock enabled me to dispense; and that every fragment of time might be gathered up

with frugality, a hymn at least could be repeated during the time of dressing; our evenings, while I plied my needle, were at once cheerfully and profitably spent. I say *cheerfully*, for nature dictates that peace and tranquillity are alike indispensable to the well-being of body and mind. I fear my conduct might be censured by some religious professors of the present day, from the fact that I rarely attended week-day services; for how would the evenings have been spent during my absence? Alas! as too many of them were spent, when I was unavoidably confined to my chamber. Should, however, this excuse not suffice, let the censorious reader know, that I was rarely to be seen at evening parties, and accepted, very reluctantly, those invitations which I could not with propriety refuse. And my children have since furnished me with anecdotes, more than sufficient to confirm my opinion, and justify my sentiments on those subjects, some of which shall be communicated in their proper place.

"To the innocent amusements of the children we were particularly attentive; not grudging the moderate cost of toys, and even manufacturing some for them ourselves; while an occasional afternoon was devoted to a country excursion; and so far from these indulgences proving injurious to the children, they certainly, from the first of our appearance at Lavenham, excited quite as much interest in our new friends as could be expected. They had the reputation of being the most

lively and intelligent little creatures that could possibly be, and our neighbours loved to amuse themselves with their engaging ways."

From the time of their removal to Lavenham, Jane and her sister were indulged with a small room, not used as a nursery, but given up to them as their exclusive domain, and furnished with all their little apparatus of amusement. And either abroad, or in this apartment, they learned to depend upon their own invention for their diversions; for it was always a part of their parents' plan of education to afford to their children both *space* and *materials* for furnishing entertainment to themselves. And so much were they all accustomed to exercise invention, for filling up agreeably the hours of liberty, that I doubt if either their father or mother was ever applied to with the listless inquiry—What shall I play at?

After a while, Mrs. Taylor became fully conscious of the inestimable advantage of a country home for her family; and she thus gives expression to her feelings:—

"When the first gloomy and anxious winter spent at Lavenham gave place to the return of spring—a season which was ever hailed by me with a joy not to be suppressed by London scenes or London bustle—I found myself still susceptible of the same delights. The crocuses and the snowdrops, and the tender bud, had a soothing influence—they tranquillized my feelings, and gradually abated my regret for the scenes I had left.

Soon the garden displayed its varied charms, and appeared in all its splendour. I now began to wonder at my insensibility to all this rich profusion of delights, on our first arrival; and while I did not cease to love my distant friends with unabated affection, I certainly did cease to wish myself among them so ardently as I had hitherto done. We saw with delight our children inhaling health with every breath. They had a spacious garden in which to gambol, without the necessity of sending them abroad with a servant, which, from my extreme dislike to the thing, invariably rendered me uncomfortable during such excursions, while residing in London."

Another extract from the same Memoirs gives evidence of maternal care which left nothing unthought of.

"We hear of those 'who have died of the doctor,' and we might hear, too, of others, whose mental energies have been paralysed, or at least endangered, by overmuch care: by being kept under such perpetual discipline, that they have imperceptibly lost their native characters, and become anything but natural, and, by consequence, anything but pleasing. Now, as we advanced in our operations, we were, in some respects, perhaps, in danger of this error; for where there is neither tyranny nor severity, it is nevertheless possible to be too incessantly watchful over mere trifles, and matters of no consequence. In one instance I am sure we were decidedly mistaken. We permitted, in the article of food, neither likings nor dislikings, from the fear of

indulging habits of daintiness. Now, during childhood —especially with children at all delicate, the stomach is most susceptible of these emotions; and not to regard them in moderation, is to inflict a degree of real suffering, of which we are most of us competent to form some idea from our present feelings. Children, during their meals, should be under as few restraints as is consistent with the decorum of a decent table. Nor should their motions, except during the hours of regular exercise, be under any particular restraint; their own feelings will best direct them when to sit, or when to stand, to lie, or to run."

Jane became, at this time, so much known among neighbours and friends as a most diverting little thing, that her company was courted, and herself flattered in a degree that would have injured the disposition of most children. I do not affirm that she was wholly unhurt by these attentions, but with all her spirit and vivacity, such was her timidity, that no feeling of vanity or obtrusiveness was apparently produced. She received the plaudits of her audiences at the baker's shop, or in the farmer's parlour, much in the same way that she afterwards heard the expression of public favour:—both might give a momentary stimulus to the exertion of her talent; but neither the one nor the other impaired her native and habitual diffidence. Yet this early celebrity did not fail to excite the watchful fears of her parents; and so far as it was possible to prevent it, Jane was restrained from thus furnishing amusement to the neigh-

bourhood, at so great a hazard to her simplicity. But, as one of a fast-increasing family, she was unavoidably left at times under the care of servants, who were gratified at having so much talent to exhibit.

At what age precisely Jane began to write verses and tales, I have not been able to ascertain. But some pieces have been preserved which, there is reason to believe, were written in her eighth year. Even a year or two earlier it is remembered, that she had furnished her memory with histories, which she used to recite with such variations as the inspiration of the moment might suggest. And though, of course, no idea of the kind had ever been given her by her parents (and no other persons had access to her who would have thought of such a thing), yet it seems that, as soon as she began to write at all, she cherished the ambition of writing a *book*. Most of her childish scribblings have the form of something prepared for the public: I have before me, of this early date, prefaces, title pages, introductions, and dedications: among these the following is so characteristic that I shall venture to produce it. It appears to have been written when she was nine years of age.

PREFACE.

"To be a poetess I don't aspire;
From such a title humbly I retire;
But now and then a line I try to write;
Though bad they are—not worthy human sight.

"Sometimes into my hand I take a pen,
Without the hope of aught but mere chagrin
I scribble, then leave off in sad despair,
And make a blot in spite of all my care.

"I laugh and talk, and preach a sermon well;
Go about begging, and your fortune tell:
As to my poetry, indeed 'tis all
As good, and worse by far, than none at all.

"Have patience yet I pray, peruse my book;
Although you smile when on it you do look:
I know that in't there's many a shocking failure
But that forgive—the author is JANE TAYLOR."

It was perhaps a year later that she addressed to her father the following

PETITION.

Ah dear papa! did you but know
The trouble of your Jane,
I'm sure you would relieve me now,
And ease me of my pain.

Although your garden is but small,
And more indeed you crave,—
There's one small bit, not used at all,
And this I wish to have.

A pretty garden I would make,
That you would like I know;
Then pray, papa, for pity's sake,
This bit of ground bestow.

For whether now I plant or sow,
The chickens eat it all ;
I'd fain my sorrows let you know,
But for the tears that fall.

My garden then should be your lot :
I've often heard you say,
There useful trees you wish to put,
But mine were in the way.

But, for the most part, Jane confided her productions to no one except her sister ; and the extent to which she indulged the propensity to write, at this early age, was unknown to her parents. Indeed, the habit of scribbling was purely spontaneous; nor was it cherished by any encouragement from her father or mother. The whole intention of their plan of education, was to fit their children for the discharge of the ordinary duties of life ; and to elicit or to display *talent* was far from being their ambition. A home education was early determined upon, and systematically pursued through a course of years. Jane and her sister spent a part of every day with their father, receiving from him the rudiments of that education, of the nature of which I shall have occasion hereafter to speak ; and they daily spent many hours with their mother, who, from the first, made her daughters her companions, treating them, and conversing with them, as reasonable beings. They were accustomed to attend and to assist her in every domestic duty, learn-

ing at once the reason and the practice of all that was to be done. In the afternoon and evening, while employed by their mother's side, subjects of all kinds, within the range of their comprehension, were discussed. These conversations were at intervals relieved by singing hymns —a practice which tends, insensibly, to blend all the best and happiest emotions of the infant heart with the language of piety.

It was especially the practice of their mother, in her treatment of her children, to avoid everything like *manœuvring*, or mystery, as well as all unnecessary concealment of the reasons of her conduct towards them. She confided in them as friends; and at the earliest time at which such ideas could enter their minds, they were acquainted with their father's affairs; so far at least, as was necessary to qualify them to sympathize in every care, and to induce them to adapt their own feelings and expectations to their parent's means. This plan, moreover, preserved them, as far as children can be preserved, from the temptation to practise those petty artifices which debase the mind, and benumb the conscience.

As it formed a material part of Jane's intellectual education, I may here mention again the custom adopted by her mother, a year or two before the time of which I am speaking—that of reading aloud at every meal. Her hearing being so far defective as to prevent her from freely taking part in conversation, she had recourse

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to a book, in order that the social hours might not be seasons of silence. By constant use she acquired the habit of taking her food with little interruption to the reading; and only on occasions of extreme ill-health was the custom wholly suspended. This practice was a solace and a delight to herself, and in some degree enabled her to forget her misfortune in being shut out from free intercourse with her family; while to them it proved, directly and indirectly, highly beneficial, especially in preventing unprofitable conversation, in cherishing intellectual tastes, and in imparting, without labour, or cost of time, a great mass of information,—the choice of books always being made with a view to the pleasure and advantage of the younger members of the family.

Since the time of which I am speaking—about seventy years ago—a great change has come in upon those tastes and modes of feeling which regulate the literary habits of well-ordered families. It is, no doubt, a change on the whole for the better; but not so in every sense: a far higher tone, and a more fastidious style prevails now than then; and it is certain that the range of books at that time accounted readable aloud in a family, included many, the very titles of which have barely been heard in my own family. We could not *now* listen, around the breakfast table, to certain works of fiction, the hearing of which *then* inflicted upon us, as I think, very little moral injury. Passages passed

over the ear, little heeded, and therefore with little ill consequence, the offensiveness of which would now startle and disgust the family party. Certain it is that this liberty, or licence, had the effect of giving to the young persons of my father's family, a breadth of acquaintance with standard English literature, which the young persons of my own family have not had the opportunity to acquire.

Speaking of the family usage of reading aloud at meals, my mother, after giving an account of the long and dangerous illness of her husband, says—

"And now the old custom of reading was resumed, which, while it enlivened the monotony of a still protracted confinement, and cheered his languid spirits, produced a similar effect on my own, harassed and worn out as they had been by excessive fatigue, anxiety, and sorrow. Indeed, it would hardly be credited how very partially this salutary custom has been interrupted during all our multifarious trials and exercises; and how the constant pressure of them on the mind has been mitigated by the return, every few hours, of this innocent and instructive relaxation."

No part of Jane's character was more prominent and distinguishing than her susceptibility to feelings of tender, generous, and constant friendship; this disposition displayed itself as early as her propensity to write; and seemed, indeed, to awaken her talent.

Her affection for her sister was of the liveliest kind;

but besides this intimacy, she early found a companion, who became the object of a more than child-like regard. Ann and Jane Watkinson were respectively about the same ages as Ann and Jane Taylor: their parents were distinguished in their circle, by good sense, superior education, and excellence of character. Their large family, of which Ann and Jane were the youngest members, was remarkably well ordered and intelligent. The four girls, with the full acquiescence of their parents, became very constant companions; and continued to be so, till the removal of this family from Lavenham to America.

My sister always thought herself peculiarly happy in her friendships, and this early intimacy, though it was so soon to be dissolved, prepared her for the enjoyment of some that were more lasting, as well as more important, in after-life.

It was with a much more lively sorrow than most children of ten years old would have felt on such an occasion, that Jane parted for ever with her friend Jane. Mr. Watkinson, though a man of grave manners, settled habits, and remarkable sobriety of judgment, and though bound to his country, if not by other feelings, at least by extensive connexions, and large mercantile concerns, broke away from all to establish himself with his family in New England. And in this instance, the voluntary banishment proved more fortunate than many that took place at the same

time. An occasional correspondence was continued between my sisters and their young friends for upwards of twenty years. I will here introduce a monument of Jane's warm attachment to her first friends, written in her eleventh year:—it breathes the spirit that always distinguished her.

TO MISS JANE WATKINSON,

ON HER LEAVING ENGLAND.

Alas! it must be,
My ever dear Jane,
You must part with me:
We must not meet again.

Accept then, my dear,
These verses from me;
Although I do fear
Far too mean they be.

I love you, believe,
My Jane and my friend!
How much should I grieve
If our friendship should end.

But this cannot be,
Believe me sincere,
Though th' Atlantic sea
Should part us, my dear.

Remember your Jane,
When alone in the grove;
Forget not her name,—
She will ever you love.

You soon sure will find
A friend that is new:
Don't push Jane behind,
But remember her too.

Adieu then, my friend;
The thought gives me pain;
My love shall not end;
So remember your Jane.

In the winter of the year 1792, the comfort of the family and the education of the children were, for a long time, interrupted by the dangerous illness of their father, which has already been alluded to. Throughout this season of affliction, their mother's thoughts and cares were almost entirely confined to the chamber of sickness. During many weeks, her husband's recovery seemed to herself, and to his medical attendants, very improbable; and long after the immediate danger had passed away, he still required the incessant attention of his anxious wife, who never willingly left him for an instant to the care of hirelings. In these months of sorrow and fear, the children, now five in number, were therefore unavoidably abandoned to the neglects and the improper treatment of servants. And not only was the course of their education interrupted, but their mother was tortured by knowing that their minds and manners were exposed to those evil influences from which, hitherto, her vigilance had, in so great a degree, preserved them. Nevertheless, she had

then, as she ever had, this comforting reflection, that it was not by their mother's fondness for dissipating pleasures that her children were ever exposed for a day, nor for an hour, to society that might be prejudicial to them.

Soon after Mr. Taylor's recovery from this illness, being obliged to leave the abode he had hitherto rented, he purchased, and nearly rebuilt, an adjoining house. In this new dwelling, family order and comfort were soon restored. The house was commodious, and the garden promised to become all that could be wished; and being in part newly retrieved from the waste, it afforded the pleasures of formation and improvement. The storm of affliction having passed away, a fair sky seemed to smile upon the distant future. But this agreeable prospect was soon wholly changed, and a sphere of new duties was opened, by the indications of Divine Providence, to my father's Christian zeal. The particular circumstances which led to this change belong not to my subject;—they were, however, such as made him think it his duty to abandon the comforts with which he had just surrounded himself, and to comply with the wishes of a dissenting congregation at Colchester, to become their minister. Early in the year 1796, he removed to that town with his family, and assumed the pastoral care of the society assembling at the chapel in Bucklersbury Lane.

The ten years of the abode of the family at Lavenham—from 1786 to 1796—the years of Jane's infancy and childhood, included the outburst of that volcano—the thunder and the heavings of which have not even yet ceased to trouble the nations. It may be thought that events of such magnitude as those of the French Revolution could scarcely have any bearing whatever upon the training of a family, remote from all concernment with public affairs. But it was otherwise in fact:—in more modes than one the "mighty thunderings, and the voices as of many waters" of that time, deeply affected the domestic life, and gave a character, never to be effaced, to those among us whose feelings and imagination were the most alive. My mother's readings included the weekly newspaper, and so it was that each narrative of horrors—piece by piece—fell upon the excited minds of the children, some of whom were gifted with the unenviable faculty of giving reality to dark and sanguinary recitals. The reign of terror painted itself—bit by bit—upon the fancy of some of us. I shall not forget the terrible impression made upon my own mind by hearing the news of the death of the French king. It was a dismal winter's afternoon, as I perfectly remember, when a neighbour suddenly broke in upon our games with the exclamation—"They have cut off the king's head!" Then followed narratives in long continuity, which, listened to weekly, from year to year, did not

fail to shed a gloom even upon the thoughtlessness of childhood.

But this was not all;—the French Revolution was near to repeating itself in England:—the spirit it roused troubled the social system even in the most obscure towns and villages. Men, quiet neighbours heretofore, then met in the streets as deadly enemies. Treason—almost tampered with on the one side, and hotly imputed on the other side—gave an intensity to party feelings which had never before, and has never since, affected the community, even in the gloomiest days of national discontent.

Mr. Taylor was no political agitator; he had his opinions, but he kept them much to himself;—he was a man of peace;—my mother had always been, and was, decidedly conservative; nor could any imputation be more unjust than that of classing her with "democrats," and the disloyal; but my father had become a leading man among the frequenters of the Meeting House at Lavenham, and he was an object, therefore, of party virulence, with his "Church and King" neighbours. There had been riots in many places; and the Lavenham mob, well understanding the temper and inclinations of their superiors — the clergy and gentry — coveted a share in these forays upon the "Meetingers." I remember an afternoon when a neighbour, wishing us well, came in breathless, to give us the warning that a furious mob, with flags flying and

drums beating, was then filling the market-place, and had vowed that they would burn Mr. Taylor's house over his head: he had lately removed to the house he had purchased and fitted up, as mentioned above —the house he had at first occupied, at the distance of an intervening garden, being then the residence of Mr. Cook, the rector of the parish—a staunch parson, after the fashion of those good old times.

The affrighted children of the family had taken position at a side window;—and I recollect—never to forget it—seeing the van of the mob, brandishing pitchforks and mattocks, making its appearance at the head of the street. At that time Dissenters had nothing to hope from justices of the peace, or their underlings. Yet at this moment deliverance came: as the mob advanced along the street, Mr. Cook, a portly wig-bearing clergyman, came forth upon the door-steps, lifted his hand, summoned to him the leaders of these his loyal friends, and addressed to them a few words which we did not hear; but the meaning of which we divined from the effect which ensued—for the mob retired, and Mr. Taylor and his family breathed again, and that night they rested quietly upon their beds once more.

The next morning my father, in his simplicity, thought it incumbent upon him to present himself at the door of his benefactor—there to offer an expression of his heartfelt gratitude for the intervention on his behalf.

He did so; but in uttering what he had intended to say, was cut short by the stately rector in this fashion.—

"Well, Mr. Taylor, you may spare your thanks; for, to tell you the truth, Mrs. Cook's sister is at this time very ill:—we fear dangerously ill; and we thought that so much noise and confusion as would have ensued, if the people had effected their purpose, *so near to us*, might have been very prejudicial to her in her weak state."

This was doing the part of a neighbour and of a Christian minister—gracefully! but such were those times!

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION AND EARLY FRIENDSHIPS AT COLCHESTER.

JANE was in her thirteenth year at the time of the removal of the family to Colchester. Changes in scene and circumstance are, to minds so much alive, as was hers, to the full force of every impression, the occasions of important and permanent changes in the character; and therefore they are worthy of a passing notice in its history. Colchester was then the station of a large body of troops, and the utmost activity prevailed throughout the town; and its broad High Street was a perpetual scene of gay and busy movement. The many interesting antiquities, also, and the agreeable country by which the town is surrounded —agreeable, as compared with the country around Lavenham — were sources of new pleasures. The house occupied by my father during his stay at Colchester, though situated near the centre of the town, had a garden attached to it, which, under his care, soon became, in some degree, agreeable; and was so much so to Jane, that it is frequently alluded to in her letters, as the scene of her happiest hours.

The course of his children's instruction was resumed by my father soon after his settlement at Colchester. Our parents were agreed in their preference of a home education, at least for their daughters, who, with the exception of a few lessons in the lighter accomplishments, received from their father their entire instruction; his engagements being such as allowed him to superintend their learning without inconvenience; and they have ever thought themselves indebted to him for solid advantages, which greatly overbalanced the value of any light accomplishments which they might more readily have gained at school. It may be permitted to me here to say that my father's methods of teaching were peculiarly happy in being at once lucid, comprehensive, and facile to the learner. He aimed less to impart those shreds of information, which serve for little except to deck out ignorance with the show of knowledge, than to expand the mind by a general acquaintance with all the more important objects of science: so that, in whatever direction in after life his children might pursue their studies, they might find the difficulties attending the first steps on unknown ground already overcome. It was also in his view a principal object of education, to prevent the formation of a narrow and exclusive taste for particular pursuits, by exciting very early a lively interest in subjects of every kind. The influence of this comprehensive system on Jane's tastes was very apparent in after

life.* For though, by the conformation of her mind, she mostly frequented the regions of imagination and of moral sentiment, she always retained so genuine a taste for pursuits of an opposite nature, as at once to impart the spirit of liberality to her mind, and to become the source of richness and variety in her writings. The result to herself of the kind of education she received, she has well expressed when, in describing a true taste, she says that—"while it will stoop to inspect and admire the most minute and laborious operations of industry, and while it feels an interest and sympathy in every branch of knowledge, it returns with a natural bias towards that which is most comprehensive in science, most intellectual in art, and most sublime in nature."

In the new circle of friends to which the family was introduced at Colchester, there were some persons of superior education and intelligence; and among the many young people with whom my sisters presently became acquainted, Jane soon found a friend, with whom, until death intervened, she maintained an affectionate intimacy. Peculiarly formed for friendship, she was happy in her friends—except that several, most dear to her, were torn from her by their early death: such was the case in the present instance. Jane's new friend was

* Her opinions on this subject she has given in several of the papers in the *Contributions of Q Q*, especially in that "on a Liberal Taste."

the youngest of the daughters of a physician esteemed for the excellence of his private character, as well as for his professional ability. He died about the time of which I am speaking, leaving a widow, four daughters, and a son. The intercourse of this family with ours, during several years, was so intimate and frequent, as to claim to be mentioned in this memoir, especially as they are frequently referred to in the correspondence.

The eldest of these young ladies was distinguished, in an eminent degree, by intelligence and sweetness of disposition, as well as loveliness of manners and of person. Her chief charm was a blended dignity and gentleness. Not long after the commencement of my sister's intimacy with this family, she exhibited symptoms of the malady of which, in the course of a few years, herself and her three sisters were the victims; and she died, after spending two or three years in frequent, but hopeless, changes of scene among her friends. The second daughter, though less lovely in person, and less gentle in disposition than her elder sister, endeared her self to her friends by the affectionate warmth and candour of her disposition. The progress of her fatal illness was more rapid than in the case of her sister: she had died at a distance from home in the preceding year, and her youngest sister was soon laid in the same grave. Jane's friend was little inferior either in intelligence or in loveliness to the eldest of the four sisters. Many of the letters that passed between her and Jane

are before me, and although there is not a little of girlish romance in them, they afford abundant proofs of great energy of character on the one part, and of much warmth and tenderness of feeling, and originality of thought on the other.

This young lady quickly followed her three sisters to the grave. She had been sent, more than once, to the West of England, and died, on her way thither, at Basingstoke, December 12, 1806. Her death, under the peculiar circumstances which attended it, made a deep impression upon the mind of her friend; and is, indeed, so fraught with instruction, that it may claim a page in this memoir.

The mild and gentle spirit of their mother did not supply to these young women the loss they had sustained in the death of their father. They soon learned to pay less deference than might have been desired to her wishes and opinions; and finding herself unable, by gentle measures, to control the high spirits of her daughters, she left them, with a faint show of opposition, to follow their own tastes. Her inefficient influence seemed rather to accelerate, than retard, their abandonment of all the principles—or "prejudices," as they were fondly called—of their education. And so eager were they to think for themselves, that a very short time sufficed to confirm them in the contempt of every principle which they had received from their parents. This tendency of their minds to discard whatever they had

been taught in matters of belief, was unhappily aggravated by their witnessing a general laxity of manners, and some flagrant scandals among the religionists, whose creed had already become the object of their scorn. Such offences are sure to produce the utmost mischief in the minds of young persons whose education, while it has elevated their notions of the requirements of the Christian life, has failed to bring their hearts under the influence of the true motives of Christian action.

In addition to such unfavourable circumstances on the one side, these young ladies were exposed, on the other, to the most seductive influences, from connexions which they had lately formed at a distance from home. Many of their new friends were persons at once intelligent, refined in manners, amiable in temper, and perfectly versed in all the specious glozings of Unitarianism. And Unitarianism was then much more specious than it has since become. For, within the intervening period, the course of controversy has deprived its professors of an advantage—so important to the success of infidel insinuations—that of having themselves no system of principles to defend.

In the society of persons of this class these intelligent young women quickly imbibed the spirit, and learned the language of almost universal disbelief; and whatever might have been their early devotional feelings, they became confessedly irreligious in their tastes and habits. This change was but little obvious in the placid temper

of the eldest daughter. She was, indeed, fascinated with the showy simplicity of this masked Deism, and perplexed by its sophistries; but she thought and felt too much to be ever perfectly satisfied with the opinions she had adopted; her mind had rather been entangled than convinced. During her fatal illness she seemed anxious to retrace her steps; and in the last days of her life she earnestly recommended her sisters to addict themselves with greater seriousness and humility to the reading of the Scriptures; and she died, imploring, with mournful indecision, to be "saved in God's own way."

Jane's friend was not at all less forward than her sisters in renouncing what she termed "the errors of her education;" she was even more determined and dogmatical than some of them in her new profession of belief. This difference of opinion, along with other circumstances, had lessened the intimacy between the two girls; they maintained, however, to the last, a friendly correspondence; though the subject of religion was, by Jane's desire, banished from their letters.

After many changes of residence, this young lady once more left Colchester, accompanied by her mother, on her way to Devonshire; but she was compelled to take up her last abode at an inn on the road; where she lingered more than three months. The disappointment of her earnest wish to reach Exeter, awakened her to the knowledge of her immediate danger; and this apprehension was soon succeeded by the terrors of an affrighted

conscience. The conviction of being an offender against the Divine law, and exposed, without shelter, to its penalties, took such possession of her spirit that, for a length of time, she rejected all consolation, and endured an agony of fear, in expectation of dying without hope or part in Christ. At length, however, her mind admitted joyfully the "only hope set before us;" and she explicitly renounced the illusions by which she had been betrayed—declaring them to be utterly insufficient to satisfy the soul, in the speedy prospect of standing before the bar of the Supreme Judge. She lived long enough to display many of the effects of this happy change: the whole temper of her mind seemed altered: she became patient, thankful, affectionate, and humble; and triumphed in the profession of her faith. "My hope," she said, "is in Christ—in Christ crucified—and I would not give up *that hope*, for all the world."

I now revert to the time of my sister's first acquaintance with these young ladies. The close intimacy and very frequent intercourse between the two families very greatly promoted the mental improvement of all parties; for there were advantages of different kinds possessed by each, which very fairly balanced the mutual benefit. About this time—that is, when Jane was in her fifteenth year, the six friends, in conjunction with two or three other young persons, formed themselves into a society for reading original essays, and for the promotion of intellectual improvement. Jane's diffidence as to her

own powers, her peculiar dread of *competition*, as well as the fact of being herself almost the youngest member of the society, prevented her from assuming any very prominent place in these exercises; but she filled her part well; and some of her compositions, which were read at the meetings of the society, give indication of that originality of thought, that sprightliness and simplicity of style, and that soundness of sentiment which have since distinguished her writings. But Jane was at that time, and indeed long afterwards, afraid to believe that she had any talent; and it is certain that a belief of the possession is necessary to the full exercise of intellectual endowments. Nevertheless, the part she took in this society very evidently ripened her powers of thinking, and accustomed her to control the excursions of her fancy. From this time onward, what she wrote was more often in the form of didactic essays, than in that of tales and romances. To what extent she continued to write verses does not appear, a few pieces only of this date have been preserved; but as they possess neither the interest that belongs to the very early exhibitions of talent, nor the intrinsic excellence of maturer productions, I do not obtrude them on the reader.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS FEELINGS—FAMILY CUSTOMS—EMPLOYMENTS AND RECREATIONS.

EVERY means of habitual instruction, and of occasional admonition, were employed by our parents to influence the hearts of their children with the motives of Christian principle; and there is reason to believe that Jane very early received strong impressions of this kind. But being reserved and timid by disposition, and peculiarly distrustful of herself, little was known of the state of her religious feelings. Her imagination, susceptible as it was in the highest degree to impressions of fear, rendered her liable at times to those deep and painful emotions which belong to a conscience that has been aroused, but not fully pacified; and these feelings, when blended with the pensiveness of her tender heart, gave, for many years, a tone of mournfulness and distress to her inward spiritual life. Religious principles, if thus clouded by gloom, must always be less influential than when the mind is in a happier state; for the heart cannot be favourably ruled by fear; yet they were not destitute

of influence upon her conduct; and I find, dated in her fourteenth year, records of pious resolutions, and emphatic expressions of the sense she had of the supreme importance of the objects of Christian faith. Some unfinished verses, written about this time, were evidently composed under the influence of feelings too strong to allow of the free play of her poetic talent,—they are interesting as records of deep and earnest religious experiences, but are too rude for publication.

A religious training, meeting with feelings so highly excitable, and where, at the same time, a young person is exposed to many seductive influences, is likely to produce frequent and painful conflicts between opposing principles, before that settled calm is obtained which makes religion the source of all that is joyous as well as of all that is excellent in the character. Such was, for a length of time, the state of my sister's mind; but I believe that though often perplexed and distressed by seeming difficulties, her conviction of the truth of revealed religion was never materially shaken; and her *habitual* belief was full and firm: and in the latter years of her life, I think it was never disturbed. Every word on the subject of religion, which is contained either in her letters to her friends, or in her published writings, is manifestly the expression of an unfeigned faith.

In a letter to a friend, she says, "Our early friendships, though they must ever be remembered with interest and fond affection, were little adapted to promote our truest

welfare; though to them, indeed, we are indebted for many benefits of a less valuable nature."

With her parents, the only choice at this time was, either to seclude their children from all society, or to allow them such as was within their reach, though not altogether, of the "kind they could have wished." The first alternative was hardly practicable; and in admitting the latter, many advantages of a secondary kind were attained. But the effect upon the minds of young persons, of frequenting the society of those in whose conversation and manners religious principle or feeling does not appear, will almost inevitably be to render what they know of religion the source of uneasiness, and of fruitless conflicts between conscience and inclination: and if, at the same time, much of hollow religionism is witnessed by them, the probable result will be either immoveable indifference, or confirmed infidelity. Happily neither of these effects was produced upon the mind of my sister; but, on the other hand, her religious peace and comfort was for a long period more or less destroyed by habits of feeling then formed.

That religion was from the first the subject of her habitual regard, will appear by the following passages from letters of early date:—

"Oh, it is hard fighting in our own strength against the evil bias of the heart, and internal enemies. Their united forces are, I am daily more convinced, far too much for anything but Grace to overcome. No good

resolutions, no efforts of reason, no desire to please, can alone succeed:—they may varnish the character; but O! how insufficient are such motives for the trying occasions of common life. I would shine most at home; yet I would not be good for the sake of shining, but for its own sake: and when thus I trace the subject to first principles, I find a change of heart can alone effect what I desire; that 'new heart and right spirit' which is the gift of God."

To the same friend, soon after, she writes:—

"I am grieved, my dear E., to hear from you so melancholy an account of the state of your mind. I wish I were a more able counsellor; or rather, I wish you would overcome your feelings, and apply to those whose consolations and advice might be useful to you. I can sincerely sympathise with you in all your griefs. I rejoice in having obtained your confidence; and I cannot make a better use of it than to urge you to seek some abler adviser. I speak from experience when I say how much benefit you might derive from an open communication of your feelings to your dear mother. Well do I know how difficult it is; yet the good to be gained is worthy the effort. You say she is so total a stranger to your feelings, that she even supposes you to be an enemy to religious principles. If then you consider the pleasure it would afford her to find you seriously inquiring on such subjects, I think you will feel this to be an additional argument for the disclosure. Two or three years

ago, my mind was in a state of extreme depression: for months I had been conflicting with the most distressing fears, and longing to disburden myself to my father: at last I could no longer support myself, and breaking through what I had thought insurmountable difficulties, I opened my mind to him completely. It was a struggle; but the immediate relief I experienced fully repaid me; and the unspeakable benefit I have derived from the conversations I have since from time to time held with him encourages me to persevere. Mr. Cecil was very urgent with me not to give way to that unhappy reluctance to converse on religious subjects, so common to young persons: he says we do not know how much we are our own enemies by this reserve. If I understand you aright, you are giving way to discontent as to your outward circumstances. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness,' and it is not for me to say you *are* happy; yet from all I know of you—your *friends*, *circumstances*, and *prospects*, you are one of the last persons whose situation would excite my commiseration. When I feel disposed to indulge discontent or fretfulness, which, alas! is sometimes the case, I always find it a good way to compare myself with the thousands of my fellow-creatures who are exposed to the miseries of poverty and want,—miseries which I never knew, and in the absence of which, I invent calamities, which the smallest exposure to those *real* ones would presently put to flight. But these reflections, consolatory as they may be, will not

always avail to restore our comfort. Discontent, no doubt, much oftener springs from internal causes, than immediately from those that are external: with affectionate friends, affluent circumstances, and while in the possession of all the world calls good, one may be very miserable. Happiness is very much in our own power; for it depends much more upon what we are, than upon what we *have*. But now I cannot help laughing at myself; for at this instant, while recommending contentedness to you, I am indulging an internal murmur, and vexing at what I ought to account a trifle,—so much easier is it to talk, or to write, than to act!"

The tendency of the education bestowed upon his children by their father was, as I have already said, to give them a taste for every branch of knowledge that can well be made the subject of early instruction. This general taste was greatly promoted among them about this time—that is, when Jane was in her sixteenth year, by his delivering to a number of young persons, who were in part his pupils, a course of scientific lectures, which were attended by many of their friends. These lectures were rendered interesting by numerous graphic illustrations of every subject; and in the preparation of these diagrams, my father was assisted by his children, who were thus familiarized in the readiest way with the topics of each lecture. Though Jane's peculiar taste was of a different order, she entered with the fullest zest into these pursuits; and ever retained a relish for matters of

science. Especially into the less technical and more popular departments of astronomical science, she entered with a genuine zest. Her eye was never indifferent to the revelations of night; she describes her own feelings in the lines—

> "I used to roam and revel 'mid the stars: * * *
> When in my attic, with untold delight,
> I watched the changing splendours of the night."

Their father determined to qualify his daughters to provide for themselves the means of independence, in some way that might be suited at once to their tastes and capacities, and to his own circumstances. With this view, no plan seemed more eligible than to instruct them in that branch of the fine arts in which he himself was proficient; this being a line in which several women have succeeded in gaining, not merely independence, but distinction as artists. This plan offered, at the same time, the advantage—so highly prized by our parents—of retaining their entire family under the paternal roof; and of carrying on a home education, while provision was made for their future welfare.

The actual consequence of this scheme was not, indeed, such as their father had intended—that of making his daughters artists by profession; for after practising engraving during a few years, engagements and duties of a different kind were opened to them. But the indirect effects of this artistic training very greatly conduced to

fit them for those very engagements; while it secured some important advantages to the family. At the time when four of his children were thus placed under their father's eye, to acquire the knowledge and practice of the arts, they were already imbued with a keen relish for literary and scientific pursuits; and conversation, which was freely allowed, was often of a kind to promote these tastes, and to keep intellect in activity. During a part of the day some one of the pupils who were under my father's care read aloud; so that the double object was almost constantly pursued—of acquiring the means ultimate independence, and of carrying on intellectual cultivation: nor at any time were the pressing engagements connected with the first object allowed wholly to interrupt the pursuit of the second.

In this scene of united employment and of mutual education, was formed that endeared family friendship, which was the source of their best enjoyments during the years that the sisters and brothers remained undivided at home; and which continued to be their solace after they were separated. Many passages occurring in the subjoined selection from her correspondence, evince how fully and how warmly Jane participated in the pleasures of this home friendship. In truth, her feelings of family affection were so strong as to form a leading feature in her character, and to require, therefore, distinct mention.

Lest their occupation in their father's studio should

produce any distaste or inaptness for ordinary womanly cares, the two girls alternately took a share in domestic duties, and their mother's solicitude that they should be thoroughly conversant with such employments was not disappointed; for not even the excitement of subsequent literary pursuits, ever impaired the domestic tastes and habits which were thus acquired. Jane—far from being the mere literary lady, averse to household concerns—was not only happy to be occupied with them, but became really a proficient in employments of this sort.

My sister's taste for the arts was such as to make her excel in their lighter branches; and many of her drawings, still in possession of her family, display a true feeling for the beautiful in nature, and a peculiar minute truthfulness and delicacy of execution; but the art of engraving was not altogether suited to her talent or taste, and it was relinquished without regret, when other paths of exertion opened out before her. In a letter of an early date, she says: "The more I see of myself, and of the performances of others, the more I am convinced that nature never intended me for an artist. * * * No one can tell how my feelings are excruciated, when I am referred to, or my opinion asked, as an *artist*. I look at the girls in the milliners' shops with envy, because their business and their genius are on a level. I think it is what I shall come to at last."

All the intervals of time between the stated hours of employment in engraving, were very carefully husbanded. Early rising was the custom of the family; and the morning and evening hours, during the winter, were employed, either in literary pursuits, or in the maintenance of friendly correspondence;—so that as few moments as can be imagined were lost from the day.

In mentioning family arrangements, and in detailing the lesser circumstances which gave their colouring to my sister's mind, or which may be necessary to be understood, to explain the allusions occurring in her correspondence, it is almost impossible to avoid what I would fain avoid—giving the history of a family along with that of one of its members.

Our pleasures were always of a social kind:—at intervals, during the winter months, we were accustomed to spend the whole evening together, while my mother read aloud; and each was occupied with some lighter work of the pencil. Simple and easily procured as were these pleasures, they have been remembered with more delight than, perhaps, often follows the most exciting amusements.

In a letter to her earliest friend, Jane Watkinson, my sister says—"We continue to pursue our employments with regularity,—seldom or ever encroaching on the usual hours. And though we sometimes wish our confinement was less, I believe we enjoy a greater proportion of happiness than many who live a life of

apparent ease and pleasure. We find it is employment that gives recreation its greatest charm; and we enjoy with a double relish little pleasures which, to those who are already fatigued with doing nothing, appear tiresome or uninteresting. When I see people perpetually tormented with *ennui*—satiated with amusement—indifferent to every object of interest, I indeed congratulate myself that I have not one spare moment, in which these demons can assail me. You, my dear Jane, know the pleasures of industry; and you know that it is essential to our real happiness."

To another friend she writes—"I feel with you the approach of winter; and though I have not to apprehend from it the distressing effects which you experience, yet the loss of our delightful evening walks—the desolate garden—the decayed vegetation—the shortening days—all tend rather to depress than to enliven. Yet I have much to love in winter; and I can truly say I enjoy the hours of quiet industry it always introduces. Ann and I often remark to each other that, whatever agreeable recreations we may occasionally indulge in, and much as we really enjoy them, we are never so happy as when steadily engaged in the room where we engrave; that is our paradise:—you may smile at the comparison, and we know the inconveniences connected with our engagements there; but use reconciles us to them; and experience teaches us that comfort and happiness are compatible with these

apparent inconveniences:—we have every inducement to industry, and we are thankful that that which is necessary, is also agreeable to us. We want nothing but a little more society:—one congenial family within our reach would be a treasure: for though we do love each other, and enjoy each other's society greatly; yet there are times when we long to recreate our wearied spirits with an intelligent friend."

During the summer our family parties were carried to some little distance in the country; and indeed, whenever weather permitted, the sisters and their brothers walked together. Jane records in many of her letters the happiness she tasted in these summer evening rambles. They served not merely the purpose of recruiting health and spirits; but tended greatly to cement the friendship to which the brothers, especially, have thought themselves indebted for the most important advantages. At the same time, a taste for the beauties of nature was roused and cherished, by the interchanged expression of delight in these ever-new sources of enjoyment. The superstitions of the heart also were respected among us; and birth-days were generally given up to social pleasures. Our family, at this time, was much secluded from extraneous society. The circle of my sister's early friends had been broken up, by the death of several of those who formed it, and the removal of others; and an interval of three or four years elapsed before those friendships were formed of which

the letters soon to be introduced, were the fruits. During this interval, the family learned to look within itself, almost entirely, for social pleasures. This, while it tended, as has been mentioned, to cherish family affection, must be confessed to have produced a rather exclusive feeling, which was afterwards not easily broken up; and when, subsequently, distant friendships were formed, that were in the highest degree gratifying and exciting, an unfavourable feeling towards less congenial society nearer home, was perhaps increased. In Jane's mind this exclusive feeling was augmented by an extreme diffidence, and by a thousand nice sensibilities, which neither a wider intercourse with the world, nor the measure of public favour she attained, ever entirely overcame. To the last, she would always gladly retreat from general society to the bosom of her family; or to the circle of those few friends whom she intimately knew and loved. Yet whatever feelings of reserve might belong to my sister's character, I think it will not be said by any who knew her, that her behaviour ever indicated intellectual arrogance, or supercilious indifference towards persons whose worth might want the embellishments of education. Her distaste for vulgarity of sentiment and manners was strong; but intrinsic *goodness* never suffered in her esteem from the mere deficiency of mental adornments. In explaining her conduct on some particular occasion, in a letter to her mother, she says—"At any rate, my dear mother,

do not accuse me of vanity and arrogance, which I from my very heart disclaim. If, in comparison with some of my friends, others of them may appear less pleasing or less intelligent, believe me, whenever I compare any with myself, the result is humiliating. And perhaps nothing is less likely to raise any one highly in my esteem than their 'writing at the rate I do:'—my dear mother, do me the justice to believe that, at whatever crevice my vanity may endeavour to peep out, it will ever fly from the literary corner of my character. I am not indifferent to the opinion of any one; though I never expect to acquire that sort of philosophic serenity which shall enable me to regard the whole circle of my acquaintance with the same glow of affection, or smile of complacency."

Whenever the health or the interests of those dear to her were at stake, the vigour of Jane's mind was roused;—her diffidence, her reserve, disappeared; and she exhibited not only disinterestedness, but a high degree of spirit and courage. In times of family affliction, the keenness of her sympathy made her actually a fellow-sufferer with those who suffered; especially if life seemed threatened, she endured the torture of tender apprehension, to a degree that always impaired her own health. These dispositions were exercised during the autumn of the year 1801. At that time the scarlet fever prevailed very generally in the town; and in many instances with fatal result. It entered our own family;

the eldest girl and three of her brothers being all attacked by it. DECIMUS, the youngest, a boy about six years of age, took the infection at school, and after less than a week's illness became its victim.

In the letter to her mother, a portion of which has just been quoted, Jane, for the first time, makes an allusion to her literary engagements in the words—"writing at the rate I do." It was about this time, that the earliest of the "Original Poems" were composed, and those with whom those Poems have been in favour may feel pleasure in learning under what circumstances most of the pieces were actually written. This curiosity may now be gratified, for the lapse of more than sixty years allows me now to speak of the family habits and usages with less reserve than I felt when at the first these Memoirs were given to the public.

I have never been a visitor in any family in which the occupation of *every moment* of the day, by every member of it, was carried to so high a pitch as it was under my father's roof. I have nowhere else seen the merest fragments of time so sedulously employed; and yet this incessantness of labour did not bring upon the family any feeling of bondage or restraint;—sedulous, energetic industry was the pervading spirit of the family:—none were urged or driven onward; each one seemed to move forward, as from an individual impulse—an internal spring.

In recalling now what were my father's daily, weekly,

and yearly achievements in his many lines of labour, I can think of them only with amazement. That which, as a boy, I witnessed, and which then seemed to me only natural and easy—which seemed only a part of the ordinary course of things—I should now contemplate with wonder. His occupations as an artist were never intermitted or abated. The laborious preparations which he made for the pulpit—the piles of books which he filled n carrying forward these systematic preparations, would have seemed business enough for any man. As a pastor he visited his people regularly, and affectionately; he was also a constant village preacher: he was the most constant attendant at ministers' meetings; and never was he wanting in his elaborate essay, when his turn came to produce his contribution in this way. He had pupils, at home and abroad; he delivered frequent lectures; and, in addition to all this constant toil, he set himself a task, which by itself might seem almost the work of a lifetime, in systematizing and in carrying out the education of his own family. I should fear not to be believed if I were to describe in detail the voluminousness of his Educational Course, as to its *apparatus*;—it was indeed prodigious. No doubt some branches of this scheme might have been lopped off without much damage to the culture of his daughters' minds. For example—it can scarcely be thought *indispensable* to the intellectual training of girls in their teens, that they should be familiar with the terms and the principles of Fortification! But I have

now before me some of the first rough copies of the "Original Poems" and the "Hymns for Infant Minds." These world-wide compositions were first written on the margins of engraved plans of fortified towns; and Jane's own hand had duly filled in the words—"*glacis*," "*counter-scarp*," "*bastions*," "*fosse*," "*lines of circumvallation*," and the rest.*

The mode of treating any such subject—Geography, Anatomy, Fortification, or what not, was this:—a plate, *quarto* size, was engraved from a drawing that had been carefully made by my father. Reams, and reams again, of paper were printed from these plates:—the prints were done up in books of a dozen each, and a book was given to each pupil—girls and boys alike: these engravings were blank outlines; each of the dozen was coloured, and then the names were written in. By the time a pupil had filled in two or three of these books, it might be presumed that he or she had acquired a tolerable familiarity with the nomenclature of the particular subject in hand. Just now some of these copper-plates are before me; the human skeleton: is it likely that after such a drilling, continued year after year, I should have forgotten the relative position of Tibia, or Fibula, or Patella, or should possibly confound the Ulna with the Radius, the Sternum with the Clavicle?

* The Editor has not thought it needful to erase this passage, though it is little more than a repetition of what has been said before. See p. 17.

In entering the breakfast-room, my father brought under his arm a drawing-case, which he lodged on a side table. The moment that he had finished his own breakfast, and while my mother continued her reading aloud, he commenced drawing—probably a flower from Nature, just brought in from the garden: his performances in this line were of great excellence: this drawing lesson, when completed, went to its place in a folio with many like it, in its turn to be duly copied by ourselves in some future drawing hour. So it was in everything, great and small: so it is that I find among the family stores of years passed—roses—cowslips—pinks—beautifully depicted; and also, which were the labours of years, copybooks filled with careful construings of the Hebrew of almost every text from the Old Testament which my father commented upon in the pulpit. Thus it was that in our home-life, and in all that concerned it, *instants* were made the most of! All these things we witnessed, and we took our part in them; and in our simplicity we believed that the world around us was travelling along parallel roads, at the same speed!

Nearly the whole of my sisters' part in the "Original Poems," the "Nursery Rhymes," and the rest of their early works, were written in minutes, or in half-hours, redeemed from other occupations to which much more importance was attached in their own view, as well as in that of their parents.

CHAPTER IV.

NEW FRIENDSHIPS, AND LITERARY ENGAGEMENTS.

In the spring of the following year, Jane visited London, for the first time since her childhood. It was during this visit that were commenced those lasting and inestimable friendships from which she derived, through the remainder of her life, so much of the highest enjoyment; and to which she was wont to attribute the happiest influence upon her character. This visit was, in a manner, the commencement of a new era both to her heart and understanding: she was then in her nineteenth year, and was prepared, by sensibilities of the liveliest kind, as well as by the long privation of social pleasures, except those found at home, to enjoy to the full an introduction to a new circle. In this circle, I may venture to say, was found a not very common assemblage of excellence—in goodness, refinement, and intelligence. Most of the young friends with whom she had hitherto been connected, were well educated and intelligent; but among her new friends were some who would have been distinguished in any circle by their

brilliant qualities of mind: they were, moreover, most of them, firm in their belief, and influenced by deep religious convictions. Among them, the alteration from literary to religious conversation was not felt to be difficult, or chargeable with incongruity. Instead of seeing, as she had before too often seen, a marked separation between intellect and religion, she now saw them so united as to give attractiveness to the one, and the highest elevation to the other.

She did not take her place among her new friends as an aspirant to literary distinction. Her literary faculty had not yet been so called forth as to give her repute among her friends, or to be felt by herself as a decided gift. She failed not, however, strongly to interest those to whom she was now introduced, or to make subsequent intercourse fully as much desired on the one part as on the other. Friendships formed at the very age of romance, are very commonly broken up when the illusions on which they were founded are dissipated: but the friendships formed at this time by my sister, were broken up only by death.

Although her disposition rendered her peculiarly averse to anything having the nature of competition or rivalry, yet she could not but feel, indirectly, the stimulating influence of the friendships she now enjoyed; for they were precisely of the sort most likely to rouse her powers, and to render the exercise of them a means of winning pleasures which she valued more highly than

any gratification of literary vanity. I think I may affirm that a very principal incentive, or perhaps the principal incentive to her poetical efforts, at least till the hope of doing good in the world became a prominent motive, was the desire of enhancing the regard of the few friends whom she loved. A sentiment of this kind so frequently occurs in the course of her correspondence, that it cannot be doubted to have been a leading motive with her. Nor, indeed, did it seem in any degree impaired after she had been exposed to excitements which too often injure the better feelings of the heart. To be loved, was, to her, a pleasure of incalculably higher price than to be admired. She first wrote in order to cherish the affection of her friends: and when, afterwards, she felt the obligation of a more serious motive, that of making a faithful employment of the talent committed to her; still that first feeling being most congenial to her character, continued to yield her the sweetest reward of her labours.

It is not always that a sphere of usefulness is chosen, and entered upon, by the deliberate determination of the agent. He who gives to all their work, not only chooses who shall serve Him, but leads those whom He calls into His service, in a path of which, when they enter upon it, they know not the direction. Ambitious minds may devise schemes big with importance, which they imagine themselves destined to exe-

cute; but it is seldom that such schemes are borne onward by the prospering breath of Heaven!

Certainly, it was with no ambitious intentions, nor even with the expectation of ever being heard of as authors beyond the immediate circle of their friends, that my sisters first wrote for the press. The circumstances which led them to do so were, in themselves, trivial; nor were they quick to attach any great importance to this new occupation. Jane wrote chiefly because she was accustomed, in everything, to be her sister's companion and partner. She did not readily admit the idea that she was responsible for the exercise of a peculiar talent. This impression did, however, after a while, gain its influence, and throughout the latter years of her life she wrote under a powerful sense of duty in this respect. I know it was her constant practice, whenever she took up the pen to write for the press, to ask guidance and assistance from Him, from whom "every good and every perfect gift descends." Yet she never enjoyed the comfort of believing that she had done well in the charge committed to her; for both constitutional diffidence and Christian humility inclined her to renounce every assumption of merit.

The first piece of Jane's which appeared in print was a contribution in the "Minor's Pocket Book," for the year 1804. It will be found among the poetical pieces which accompany this volume. The pathos, simplicity,

and sprightliness of "The Beggar Boy," even though the verse is fettered by the necessity of introducing a list of incongruous words, attracted much more attention than is often the lot of productions appearing in so humble a walk of literature. Her sister Ann had contributed to the same publication for several preceding years, and had gained notice. The authors of these verses became the subjects of inquiry; and it was not doubted by those who were competent to calculate the probable success of literary enterprises, that a volume of pieces, exhibiting the same vivacity, truth of description, good taste, and sound views, would secure public favour.

Their father did indeed regard with pleasure the new engagements of his daughters, and yet it was with some anxiety, for he was strongly averse to the idea of their becoming authors by profession. He, therefore, favoured their literary occupations only so far as these might consist with the predominance of those pursuits, which he considered to afford much more safe and certain means of independence. Nor did their mother (who *then* would have thought nothing more improbable than that she herself should become known as a writer) look with less distrust upon the effect of these new and exciting engagements. They were therefore carried on under just so much restriction as prevented their engrossing any considerable amount of thought and time. Almost everything written by my sisters for some years after their first appearance in print was

composed, either before the regular occupations of the day had commenced, or after they had been concluded. It was for the most part, after a day of assiduous application that the pieces contained in the volumes of "Original Poems," and "Rhymes for the Nursery," were written: nor was it, I think, till a much later period, that they ever permitted themselves the indulgence of an entire day given to the labours of the pen.

Under restrictions such as these, many of the most useful, and some even of the most admired literary works have been produced. It is true, that to those who are at once urged and impeded on the course of intellectual labour, such circumstances seem altogether unfavourable; and they are fain to acknowledge that, if freed from the fetter, and exempted from the goad, genius would make a wider circuit, and bring home richer treasures. But this supposition may not be well founded: for so vague are the spontaneous efforts of the mind, and so much more painful is the effort necessary for useful production, than that of which most minds are at all capable when free from urgent motives—that these seemingly unfavourable circumstances ought, in many cases, to be welcomed as the stimulus necessary to put the mind in full activity.

Their mother thus refers to the early literary engagements of her daughters.

"During these various scenes, the talents of our two girls still continued farther to develop themselves. The

little pieces which they had sent to the 'Minor's Pocket Book,' induced the publisher to inquire who the authors were: he then applied to them for any pieces they might possess. These they collected and sent, receiving ten pounds for them, and afterwards five, with a promise of fifteen more for a second volume. The arrival of the first sum was an interesting and memorable event."

The little volume of "Original Poems for Infant Minds, by several young persons," was found to be highly acceptable to children, and so useful in the business of early education, that, in a very short time, it obtained an extensive circulation. It was quickly reprinted in America, and translated into the German and Dutch languages. What share of this success belongs to each of the contributors to the volume, could not be ascertained, even if to make the inquiry were of any importance. Jane, for her part, was ever forward to surrender all praise to others.

The success of this volume presently suggested the production of a second, of a similar kind; and the young writers, gratified by the unexpected favour they had won, readily listened to the wishes of parents and children. Although children will not be long entertained, or effectively instructed by mere dulness, yet it is true that even the more intelligent of them may be entertained, and to a certain extent instructed, by what is very trivial, or is very much deformed by

faults of style. But it is happy when the power of pleasing children, and of strongly engaging their attention, is so united with good taste and delicate tact in the choice of embellishments, and correct judgment, and sound principle in all that bears upon morals, as to give to such productions those merits that, in the work of education, are of higher importance than perhaps any other excellences. For, to furnish reading, without vulgarizing the taste, or contaminating the imagination, or enfeebling the judgment, or perverting the feelings, is a high praise in those who write for the young.

A part of my sister's contributions to some of these little works, was composed under rather peculiar circumstances, which must here be narrated; because they served to mature her character, and to exhibit its solid excellences in a somewhat new and difficult situation.

CHAPTER V.

ALARM OF INVASION—FLIGHT TO LAVENHAM.

DURING the autumn and winter of the year 1808, the alarm of a French invasion (and it has since been ascertained that it was a well-founded alarm) prevailed throughout the country, and especially along the eastern and southern coasts. Colchester was, at that time, a principal military station: the incessant movements, therefore, of a large body of troops, held always in a state of readiness to meet the expected enemy, tended of itself to keep alive a constant impression of the impending danger; besides this, the military persons who were in command of the station, took pains to excite the popular fears. Every day some whispered intimation of immediate danger from "the best authority" was circulated through the town, till a strong and general impression prevailed that the immediate neighbourhood might, very probably, become the scene of the first conflict with the invaders. In this state of public feeling, not a few of those of the inhabitants whose means allowed them to do so, either left the

town for a time, or made such arrangements as should enable them to leave it at an hour's notice.

At this time the house which, as has been mentioned, my father owned at Lavenham, was without a tenant: this circumstance seemed to invite the step which the fears of the time suggested—that of removing a part of the family thither, where a home would be always in readiness for those who remained, should it be needed. No material difficulty prevented the execution of this plan, and it was determined that Jane, with two of her brothers, and an infant sister, should remove to the vacant house. This separation of the family took place in the middle of October.

So great was the confidence placed by her parents in Jane's discretion and ability, that they committed this divided portion of their family to her care without anxiety; nor was their confidence disappointed in any instance. Jane, though gifted with uncommon vivacity of spirit, was thoughtful and provident in a degree rarely found at her age;—she was then only twenty. I can remember her active, laborious, and well-concerted management of our little establishment. Such was her industry, that the new cares of a family were suffered but in a small degree to infringe upon the customary hours devoted to engraving; nor these upon her literary engagements; for her winter evenings were assiduously occupied in composing her share of some little works which soon after appeared.

The characteristics of Jane's mind, and of her mother's too, are displayed in the letters which passed between Lavenham and Colchester at this time. It should be said in explanation of some circumstances alluded to in these letters, that the alarm which had agitated the public mind for many months, and at Colchester especially, had made everybody familiar, in imagination at least, with the terrible confusion to be apprehended from an invasion. Even the wealthy burgesses of the town had come to talk of shifts and contrivances, and modes of living, and modes of conveyance, the most unlike their ordinary style. Much more did those whose means were limited reconcile themselves to such unusual courses. A start off to the sea, during the season, might imply a line of post-chaises and what not; but it was not so when, with Buonaparte on the coast, or near it, the half of a frugal family was to pioneer the inland flight of the whole. There was a van or wagon, once or twice in the week, dragging its cumbrous bulk through deep Suffolk lanes, from Colchester to Lavenham. In this van places were engaged for four of the family and their packages—not a few.

At this time there was a constant stream of soldiers' wives and infants, who had been to take leave of their husbands in the barracks, and were returning to their hamlets in Suffolk and the midland counties. The day of the family exodus from Colchester, this van was

nearly filled with a company of this order. Jane, her brothers and sister, were handed into their berths in the after-part—call it the quarter-deck of the vessel—whence their prospect outward was over the heads of a score of good women, most of whom had a baby or two to nurse. The way was long—at the pace of two miles per hour, or little more, and the autumn evening came on before the first stage out of town was reached; and a night—unusually dark, so we thought it—made needful the one lanthorn over the shafts, which gave the driver a chance of keeping to the road. It was late when the welcome announcement roused the party from their unquiet sleep, that a hospitable house had been reached. Jane's first letter to her mother was as follows:—

"LAVENHAM.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"We are all safe and well this morning, which is a matter to me both of thankfulness and surprise. We had, indeed, a sorry journey. Upwards of twenty inside; and each woman had a young child. They were, indeed, of the lowest sort, but they were *civil* creatures. Our party appeared to excite some surprise amongst them. 'I dare say they're only going on a frolic,' said one: 'No, no,' said another, 'that they aren't, by *her grieving*.' It was droll to see, when we first set off, that the whole party were in tears, for the women were soldiers' wives just parting from their

husbands, not knowing whether they should ever meet again; and it was a long time before they dried their tears. But what we suffered with heat, smells, and bad language during the day, was nothing to what we suffered when night came on. The road bad—the wagon so loaded that we expected to break down, and the horses so tired, that they could scarcely get on. The drivers were frightened, and you may be sure the passengers were so. However, at half-past nine, we arrived at Mr. Langley's door; for they would not drive to ours,—and we found them waiting for us with much anxiety, and more kindness. They would not hear of our going home that night, and had prepared beds for us. Mrs. Langley was very poorly, and had gone to bed; but we had a nice supper, and went to bed, glad indeed to get there, for I had been terribly ill the whole day * * * but we are now all well, and much refreshed by our night's rest. Our coming has excited much surprise, and some alarm. We have been this morning and have seen everything safely unpacked at our house. The little parlour with a nice fire, though unfurnished, looks very comfortable, and we are quite in good spirits. The Langleys are really too kind. They insist on our breakfasting here this morning, and Mrs. L. presses us to dine, but that we shall not do * * * * * Mrs. L. is very uneasy; all her friends live near the coast. Pray let us know how the alarm goes on. Our garden is a wild paradise. What noble willows!

I am quite faint for my breakfast, therefore adieu for the present."

The house stood in one of the least frequented parts of the town—the garden abutting upon a common, and the house, being only in part occupied, and scantily furnished, the aspect of things within, as well as without, was very much in harmony with the feelings of terror under which we had sought this asylum. Jane exhibited on this occasion the strength of her mind; for although she was peculiarly subject to impressions of fear, both from real and imaginary dangers, such was her resolution, and such the force of principle, that, without wishing to retreat from her situation, she endured (what those who have more physical courage never endure) the terrors of a susceptible, and strongly excited imagination. This is indeed the courage of women; and it may be questioned whether, in the possession and exercise of this high quality, the weaker sex does not often surpass the stronger.

Yet our banishment was by no means without its enjoyments; for Jane, who had a genuine domestic taste, soon gave an air of comfort to the part of the house which we occupied: and we received, during our stay, the kindest attentions from several families with which ours had been on terms of intimacy while formerly resident at Lavenham. I may here insert a few extracts from letters written by my sister at this time.

To her friend Jane Watkinson she writes—"I believe Mrs. W. has received from Ann a full account of our late flight to Lavenham, where, after the first alarm had subsided, we found a very pleasant and comfortable asylum, for some months. Though we felt it a little mortifying, that our neighbour Buonaparte should have it in his power to give us such a thorough panic, and so completely to derange all our affairs, yet, I own, I enjoyed my residence in the old spot exceedingly. Being in our own house, and for so long a time, I began to fancy myself once more an inhabitant; and it was not without pain that I took leave of a place that will ever be dear to me. During our stay at Lavenham, I took some delightful walks: perhaps you have by this time forgotten most of them. I found it highly interesting to tread once more the oft-trod paths; and to recognise many a spot that had been the scene of former enjoyments. I know not whether to you it is so; but with me, no local attachments are so strong as those formed in childhood. * * * * *

"LAVENHAM, *October 18th*, 1803.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"We have safely received your parcels and letters; which were very acceptable to us. I am now quite comfortably settled in my new house; and feel as if I had taken up my station here for a constancy. I manage capitally, as you may suppose; and 'give

satisfaction.' I rise (I am sorry I cannot use the plural number) between six and seven, and get everything in order before breakfast, but with all my endeavours I cannot begin engraving before eleven; to which I sit down again half an hour after dinner. We keep school very regularly; and Jemima comes on, both in reading and work. As to economy, I study it as much as possible; and, for our employments—they are certainly broken in upon at present; but will be less and less so, as we get more settled. We have not indulged in one walk yet; though the country and weather have been beautifully inviting: but we sit at the bow window next the garden, and quite enjoy ourselves."

From a letter of a later date a few sentences may be extracted:—"I write this in hopes of your having it in time for the carrier, that you may know what things we most want. Of news I have none; and should not have written now, but for the news above-mentioned. Thank you for the carpet; it is quite a luxury to us. Although we brought everything absolutely necessary we have few conveniences; and though, if we were all huddled together in a barn, expecting the French to overtake us every instant, we might be very well contented with—

'An open broken elbow chair;
A caudle-cup without an ear; &c.;'

yet, living quietly, like our neighbours, we rather miss the conveniences we have been used to. I must confess we did not *fast* on the fast day; we went, however, in the morning to the prayer meeting, where we heard an excellent prayer from Mr. Meeking, of three-quarters of an hour—its length spoiled it; for we were all ready to faint. In the afternoon, we walked with the children. I thank you and father for what you say about walking; but really we seem very little to need more exercise than we have in the house and garden, where the children play continually. If we take a walk once or twice a week, just to look at the old places, and show the children the new ones, it is quite sufficient."

The following letter appears to have been written soon after the arrival of the party at Lavenham :—

"My dear Mother, "Lavenham.

"I sit down to charm you with an account of the kindness of our friends; but first I will tell you for your comfort that all the china, &c. &c. is safely unpacked, and locked up in the buffet. We came directly after breakfast and arranged everything comfortably. Mr. Hickman called about eleven; walked round the garden, and directed us how to manage it; and then we had a long consultation as to how to open the little parlour shutter, which at last by dint of hammers and

screw-drivers we effected, and no sooner was it done, than we beheld, what I think must have been a million of flies, that, I suppose, having heard of Buonaparte's intentions had, like ourselves, taken up their winter quarters here. We consulted with Mr. H. on the propriety of having anybody in the house; but he says there is no need; that there is no such thing as housebreaking in Lavenham. He only remembers one instance many years ago, at Lingley, and then, the man being hanged, so much terror was excited, that no one has ventured since in the same line. Isaac thinks Lavenham very desolate, but he is much pleased with the house, and charmed with the Hickmans. * * * We had so many of that lady's customary speeches to-day, that we could hardly help laughing—

"'Oh, Mr. Taylor, I must show you that print your father gave me, before I went to America,' said Mr. H., and brought it in directly. 'Dear Mr. Hickman,' said Mrs. H., 'Master Taylor had better see it where it hangs,' and then led us into her elegant drawing-roon. They were much pleased with the children, who behaved very well. They have a high idea, they say, of your method of managing a family. Everybody treats us with great attention: nobody laughs at us for coming; most think it quite right. Our letter excited much alarm; everybody has heard of it. The people by their inquiries seem to think we have been admitted to Buonaparte's privy council. 'There are the Taylors,'

we hear people whisper as we go along, and they stare at us till we are out of sight. The town is quite in a bustle to-day; the fair much fuller than we expected. We saw people coming in crowds from the Bilstone road to it. * * * * Any letter you send (by post) except on Sunday, will reach Lavenham the next day. Pray write directly, if there's any news, good or bad.

"Your affectionate

"JANE."

Jane during the winter made an exchange with her mother and sister; she returning for a time to Colchester; and they taking her place at Lavenham. Thus she writes, dating—

"COLCHESTER, *January 19th*, 1804.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

* * * "By father's directions I will proceed to answer some of the points in your letter, which appear to us very answerable. * * * The good people at Lavenham seem to us to go a little too far in their assertions; how, for instance, can they affirm that Buonaparte never threatened us, when, besides the immense army so long collected on the coast, which we *know* was called the Army of *England*, (and what was that but a threat?)—did he not declare to Lord Whitworth, that he would settle the dispute on the banks of the Thames? And was not that a threat? Besides numberless other instances in which we *cannot* have been

totally misinformed. What do you mean by saying their numbers are inconsiderable? Are there not certainly 200,000 men collected on the coast, besides large armies in other parts of France? And it appears to us a little inconsistent that people should at one time maintain that Buonaparte never intended, or thought of invading us, and then, that if we were not so much prepared to oppose them they certainly *would* invade us! As to the French army being in winter quarters, we have never heard it, nor do we believe it; and, as to all danger being over for the *winter*, very strong expectations have been raised about this day month; and Heath has very lately had fresh orders from Government to make provision in Cambridgeshire; as they are considerably expected on the Norfolk coast, and to come round through Cambridge.

"We think it looks very like a Providential interposition that the weather has been so remarkably and unusually mild. They say in Holland that their ports not being frozen is almost *unexampled*, and indeed it appears nearly as remarkable as the Waal being frozen when the French took Holland. Though at Colchester there are many unbelievers and laughers; there are many too who still entertain strong fears. Henry Thorn, for one, firmly believes they *will* come, and advises us not to return. The Stapletons have returned, on account of their school—by no means because they think the danger is over. The King's camp equipage is come to Chelms-

ford, and the Bishop of Worcester's palace (at Worcester) is preparing for the Royal family to fly to. A telegraph, which will cost 1000*l.* is now erecting at our barracks. Do all these things look as though all danger were over? As to this being a garrison town, it is of no use at all, unless it were *fortified*, which is not the case with any town in England; and Colchester, as a considerable town, and one so near the coast, must be more likely to attract the enemy, than an obscure out-of-the-way place like Lavenham."

The following letter from her mother to Jane, must have been written late in this autumn.

"*Thursday*, 10 *o'clock.*

"MY SWEET DARLINGS,

"Your epistle received last night was truly refreshing; it gratified us in so many points that we read it twice over, and it is now on the road to London to gratify our dear friends there. Your management is unexceptionable, is admirable—save in one point; and now I am going to scold most heartily. You *boast* that you have not taken one walk since you have been there! More shame for you. I wonder you dared to mention such a thing. No exercise! Perhaps you will say *you* have enough with the household affairs; but where is Isaac's? Where is the children's? Shame on you! Your father was quite surprised at it, and desires me to say that he expects you to walk every day when the

weather will permit, for an hour; also see that the children run in the garden. Are they good? I hope Jeff's education is not at a stand, and that he keeps school-hours. I am *very* sorry it is not in my power to send you a seed-cake; but on Tuesday, when we should have baked, we could get no yeast: yesterday you know was fast-day; we therefore cannot bake before to-morrow; I promise then to send you one next week. As for the linen, by all means have it washed at Lavenham. Send me home everything that wants mending: pray let nothing get out of repair, but send it home at once. As for kitchen-utensils, you must first tell me what you want. I thought you had taken all necessaries; however, I will accommodate you to the best of my power when I know your wants. And now for news: all here is perfectly quiet, and still no *thinking* people at all doubt our being invaded; but as to their success there are different opinions: the foolish and uninformed, which you know in Colchester is by much the greatest part, now laugh at the late alarm—laugh at those who have left the town—laugh at General Craig—laugh at everything, and think all as safe and secure as if they were in the Garden of Eden: sure this is not one of those awful still calms before a violent storm; certain it is that General Craig is still indefatigable in spite of all laughing; the Butter Market is being walled up to make a guard-house; and everything goes on with the utmost vigour. Yesterday was the Fast; the volunteers, mayor, &c., all went to St.

James's to hear Mr. Round, who preached from the *Maccabees!* Your father entered, for the first time in his life, most seriously and earnestly into the spirit of the fast. He took one half-round of toast at breakfast, and no dinner: I took no breakfast, save half a pint of water, and a very little dinner; no cloth laid: and Martin and Kitty were very compliant. Your father and Martin went to meeting in the morning; in the afternoon we read and prayed at home; and in the evening had a lecture at our own place. I chose the text; it was this: David's words to Goliath of Gath,—'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' It was a wonderful discourse. The people came about your father in the vestry, and begged him to have it printed; several of them saying they 'would be five shillings towards the expense.' His comparison between Goliath of Gath and Buonaparte was ingenious: *Goliath* has three significations,—Revolution, Captivity, and Passing over: he dwelt some time on his armour, his target, his spear like a weaver's beam, compared to the amazing preparations now made to invade us: on the Lord as the God of *Hosts*—exhorting to trust in Him as such. He feared, should they make the attempt, many of our dear countrymen would wallow in their blood; and expressed himself in the most affectionate terms to those of the volunteers now before him (in their uniforms), praying the

Lord of *Hosts* to cover their heads in the day of battle, &c. But I shall have Gosling call, and must conclude.

"I had intended to send you the other three chairs, but he cannot take them. I will, however, try him with the little parlour carpet. I think you will be glad of it; if he cannot take it, Finchman shall, with the chairs, &c. next week. Your dear father set off this morning for London with Mrs. Stapleton, the two girls, Joseph, old Stapleton, and Miss B——, who, I rejoice to say (poor thing), is going to be governess to Butler's children, while school is suspended; so here I am all alone; but God, who always gives strength for the day, supports my spirits wonderfully. I am tolerable in health, and Martin is very good; so, my dear girl, make yourself easy. When your father returns, unless things should very much alter for the better, his intention is to send you more and more of his property weekly, and after the wash I propose with Martin to pay you a visit for a week or two, when Isaac would return home, and when Martin has continued as long as himself, he shall return again; so they shall take it in turns. Our dear Ann shall also pay you a visit, for we see no likelihood of your quitting your station all the winter, unless something very decisive takes place. As for the kindness of your friends, we cannot say enough to express our gratitude. God bless them all, and you my dear dutiful children, the comforts of my life, the solace of my heart. Farewell all,

"ANN TAYLOR."

Towards the close of her stay at Lavenham, Jane writes to her mother :—

"Could you see us just now, I cannot tell whether you would most laugh at, or pity us. I am sitting in the middle of the room, surrounded with beds, chairs, tables, boxes, &c. &c., and every room is the same. But our brains are in still greater confusion—not knowing now what to do. Have you heard this new alarm? It is said the French are actually embarking. Mr. Hickman strongly advises us not to move till we hear something more. We have at length resolved to wait, at all events till Saturday; and if you write by return of post, we shall be able to act then according to your wishes; but in the meantime we shall be in a most delightful plight, for most of the things are packed up, ready to go to-morrow: and then, if after all we must stay, it will be vexatious enough. If you find there is no foundation for the alarm, you will of course order us home directly. But do not fail to write, for we are quite deplorable.

"And now, having despatched all my business, let me thank my dear mother for her wholesome reprimand, which, I hope, will be a lesson for the future. I feel no inclination to apologize for myself; but acknowledge, upon reflection, I was wrong—when I wrote I did not reflect. Yet this I can say: that, whatever opinion I may have formed of Mr. ——, I have never been otherwise than polite to him. What I said to L. was

unpremeditated; and believe me, if I had thought it probable that she would ever have met him, I should not have said what I did. Further, I declare I do not despise the gentleman, and I wrote only for my amusement; though it should not have been at another person's expense."

The alarm of invasion scarcely subsided till the spring of the following year. But at the earliest appearance of returning security, Mr. Taylor gladly recalled his family to their home; and in the month of February we were once more united under the paternal roof.

The winter passed at Lavenham, under circumstances of this sort; the mind kept alive by responsibilities, alarms, and unremitted occupations, and also the stimulus of new literary engagements, had great influence in giving strength and energy to Jane's character. In her twentieth year these various excitements would naturally take more effect upon her principles and feelings than they would have done ten years later in life.

CHAPTER VI.

EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

ABOUT this time commenced that series of deaths among her earlier young friends, to which frequent allusion is made in Jane's letters. The death of the four lovely sisters, of whom mention has already been made, was succeeded by that of several other endeared companions. But while early intimacies were thus dissolved, the more important and more lasting friendships that had now been formed were strengthened, and became every year the sources of increased pleasure and advantage. The summer months were always enlivened by visits from some of our young friends; and the records which I find among my sister's papers, of these social enjoyments, show that she derived from them, both the liveliest delight and the most important benefits. The interruption occasioned by these visits to ordinary occupation, was not much greater than was needed to recruit the spirits, and to prepare the mind for the unremitting occupation of the winter months; for as soon as evening walks were no longer practicable, the labours of the pen

were eagerly resumed, and, till the returning summer, rarely suspended.

Reference has been made above to the reluctant consent which their father and mother gave to their daughter's literary engagements; and I have said that the latter would have thought anything probable rather than that she should herself ever come before the public as an author. This unthought-of event did, however, actually occur, some years later than the time now in view. Both father and mother won success in different lines as authors; and in the list of the various works productions of the "Family Pen," the titles of several works will be found which, in their day, were received with much favour, and some of which have maintained their place among books of the same class—up to this present time. My mother was in her fiftieth year when the volume entitled "Maternal Solicitude" appeared. This book passed through several editions within three or four years after its first publication. My father's book—"Advice to the Teens," has also had an extensive circulation.

Jane's letters to her young friends will best exhibit her feelings, and describe her employments at this period.

TO MISS SARAH LUCK CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *December 20th*, 1805.

MY DEAR LUCK,

If, four or five years ago, you had suffered so long a chasm to be made in our correspondence, I should

doubtless have indulged in some such painful soliloquy as you have prepared for me; or perhaps in a yet more touching and plaintive strain. But now, enjoying all the sober rationality of maturer age—now, having happily passed that wild and fanciful season, by some denominated the *silly age*—or, at least, being a degree or two more rational than I was then, I feel far more disposed to attribute the long intervals to which every correspondence is liable, to some of those thousand nameless hindrances which every day presents, and to that inconvenient spirit of procrastination, of which most of us more or less partake, than to declining affection, to fickleness, or to affront. Perhaps it may have occurred to you in the course of this long period, which I fear has nearly put you out of breath, that I have been speaking one word for you, and two for myself: it would be very unfair for you to suppose so; but even should your supposition be just, you will allow that to afford another person one third of a good thing, that might have been all one's own, is no mean proportion. But now it will be making a poor return for all this generosity, if you should become more than ever remiss in your communications; and then make yourself easy by thinking that Jane will only impute it to "some nameless hindrance, or an inconvenient spirit of procrastination."

But now for your grave and appropriate question, namely—"What do you think of this famous victory

(Trafalgar)?" To which, after due consideration, I reply: Why, pray, what do *you* think of it? for I make little doubt that we have thought much alike on the subject. Should you, however, question this, and suppose that my humbler ideas have not stretched to the same height as yours, I will convince you of the contrary, by endeavouring to recall some of the reflections that were inspired by this "famous victory." And first I thought that—it was a very "famous victory;" did not you?—and besides this, and much more, I thought a great many things that the newspapers had very obligingly thought, ready for me. Well, but to speak in a graver strain, and if you are disposed to hear what I have really thought about our late victories;—why read on:—

Now, impressed with the idea that my private opinion could in no way affect the public weal, I have allowed myself to form one without restraint; well knowing that I might vainly attempt to pluck one leaf from the hero's laurel, even if I were disposed to do so, which I assure you I am not. For every one who performs his part with zeal and success, claims respect: and who can deny that Nelson has nobly performed his? But tell me, is the character of the warrior in itself to be admired? or, rather, can it be loved? From what motives does a man at first devote himself to the trade of war? Do you not think it is more often from a desire of glory than from patriotism? And now,

though I have often endeavoured to discover what there is either amiable or generous in the love of *glory*, I have never yet been able to discern it. I cannot tell how or why it is a less selfish principle than the love of riches. Is not he in reality the truest patriot who fills up his station in private life well—he who loves and promotes peace, both public and private; who, knowing that his country's prosperity depends much more on its virtue than its arms, resolves that his individual endeavours shall not be wanting to promote this desirable end? And is not he the greatest hero who is able to despise public honours for the sake of private usefulness—he who has learned to subdue his own inclinations, to deny himself every gratification inconsistent with virtue and piety, who has conquered his passions, and subdued his own spirit? Surely he is "greater than he that taketh a city," or a squadron. If the great men of the earth did but act on these principles, our heroes would be sadly at a loss for want of employment; I fear they would be obliged to turn to making ploughshares and pruning-hooks.

Now perhaps you will call me an ungrateful creature, but really I think I am not so—though, certainly, I have not joined without some secret misgivings in the unqualified plaudits that have sounded from all quarters. If so many brave men *must* be sacrificed, I heartily rejoice that the dear-bought victory was ours. But how is it possible, while we regard them not merely as

machines of war, but as immortal beings, to rejoice without sorrow and dismay in the result of the *rencontre?* * * *

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *February 12th*, 1806.

* * * In truth, Jane Taylor of the morning and Jane Taylor of the evening are as different people, in their feelings and sentiments, as two such *intimate* friends can possibly be. The former is an active handy little body, who can make beds or do plain work, and now and then takes a fancy for drawing, &c. But the last-mentioned lady never troubles her head with these menial affairs;—nothing will suit her but the *pen*;—and though she does nothing very extraordinary in this way, yet she so far surpasses the first-named gentlewoman, that any one who had ever received a letter from both, would immediately distinguish between the two, by the difference of the style. But to drop this ingenious allegory, I assure you it represents the truth, and I am pretty well determined not again to attempt letter-writing before breakfast. For really I am a mere machine—the most stupid and dronish creature you can imagine, at this time. The unsentimental realities of breakfast may claim some merit in restoring my mental faculties; but its effects are far surpassed by the evening's tea: after that, comfortable, social, invigorating meal, I am myself, and begin to think the

world a pleasanter place, and my friends more agreeable people, and *entre nous*, myself a much more respectable personage, than they have seemed during the day; so that by eight o'clock I am just worked up to a proper state of mind for writing. If you are liable to these changing frames, you will not only excuse and feel for me, but heartily acquiesce in my resolution of now putting down the pen till *the evening*.

It is now indeed evening, and several days have elapsed since I wrote the foregoing, and I do assure you that nothing but the fear of being unable to fill another sheet in time for my father's departure, should prevail with me to send you so much nonsense. I often reproach myself for writing such trifling letters; but it is so *easy* to trifle, and so hard to write what may be worth reading, that it is a sad temptation not to attempt it. * * *

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *May 8th*, 1806.

MY DEAR LUCK,

I have just been taking a solitary turn round our pretty garden, on this most lovely evening; and glad should I have been to have enjoyed it in company with my dear Luck. But as this was a fruitless wish, I thought I could do nothing better than return to my desk, and spend an hour with you in this way. Ann and a young friend who is come to stay with us while father and

mother are absent, are going to enjoy this serene sky abroad; but I have determined to forbear that pleasure, for the sake of enjoying even this imperfect intercourse with you.

My dear Luck, much as I love London for the friends it contains, I think my delight in country scenery increases every year; and while I occasionally cast a wistful look towards places where I feel a *heart* interest —feeling as if imprisoned in this uncongenial spot: yet when I contrast smoke, and noise, and darkness, with the smiling landscape, and the clear sky, and all the beauties of a country walk, which is here always within reach, I forget my privations of other kinds, and acknowledge that "the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places." I doubt not that, if I live, the time will come when I shall look back to our social evening walks here with rapture—or, perhaps, with agony! I am sure I shall never know happier days than these, though now, indeed, I am not without my anxieties; but, oh! how much deeper anxieties may I have to encounter! When I look without, and observe the portion of affliction which is distributed to others, and more especially when I look within, and see the mass of vanity and worldly-mindedness which perhaps can be dispelled only by affliction, I assure you I tremble; and while I look round on my many, many comforts,—not, I hope, without an emotion of thankfulness—I feel the wisdom of enjoying them *now*: one link broken in the dear family

chain, and the happiness I now enjoy could, I think, never be entirely restored; and oh, how soon it may be snapped! What a wide field for anxiety and distress is a large family, to every member of which one's happiness seems to cling! Yet we know they are but "short comforts, borrowed now, to be repaid anon." In this light I would ever desire to regard them with a feeling of grateful pleasure as to the present, and of cheerful resignation for the future.

I feel much gratified by the many expressions of affection contained in your last letter; this is the sweetest music I can listen to. The voice of affection is distinct from that of flattery; and I hope the former will ever be more delightful to me than the latter. To merit the esteem of the few individuals whose esteem I believe myself to enjoy, is my constant wish, and almost my highest ambition. I do not know why I have said *almost;* for I know nothing more desirable—nothing which could make me more truly happy.

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *September 24th*, 1806.

Good morning to you, my dear L. But if you are, as I conjecture, enjoying the last grateful slumber, believe me, I intend not to disturb you; though I own it seems a little hard that I should be employed so early (for it is only half-past seven) for your amusement and

instruction. And, moreover, that I may have all the praise that belongs to me, permit me to assure you that I have been up this hour or more, and have done a great deal of business; while you, perhaps, have only been struggling with an obstinate dream, that at last has left you with all its delusions, to awake no wiser or happier than you were yesterday. If this has been your case, I heartily sympathise with you; for often has my evil genius thus tormented me; though, in truth, I have no great right to complain of him, since I must allow that in my waking dreams I have not unfrequently practised the same species of torture upon myself.

But to be serious, my dear L., I do believe that this habit of *castle-building* is very injurious to the mind. I know I have sometimes lived so much in a *castle*, as almost to forget that I lived in a *house;* and while I have been carefully arranging aërial matters *there*, have left all my solid business in disorder *here*. To be perpetually fancying what *might be*, makes us forget what we really are; and while conjuring up what we might have, we are negligent of what we really possess. You will perceive I am recollecting *youthful* follies: do not suppose, I beseech you, that I *now* indulge in these childish reveries. At *my age*, you know, I go soberly on, doing my proper business in its regular routine. Will you believe that I ever suffer my thoughts to wander from the employment of my hands? If, for example, I am making tea, I think about the tea, the

tea-pot, the water, the sugar, the cream, the bread, the butter, and the plate, all in regular succession; then of the company, when it is proper to make the customary inquiries—and, think you, at any other times? In short, I am now a discreet personage, having left all the follies of sixteen far in the background.

If you remembered Eliza L. Stapleton, in health, you were, I dare say, much shocked by the alteration. Poor L. is also on her journey; whether she will ever reach Exeter is doubtful; if she do, I fear she will survive her arrival a very short time. You are now witnessing the progress of this complaint in your cousin. Let me hear continually, when you write, how she is. E. and L. make six of our immediate friends whom we have attended in this disorder; besides many others, not so near to us, who have gone in the same way. That I, who am certainly delicate, have stood so long, and under many disadvantages, is more than might have been expected; and I hope excites thankfulness. I have for some time felt as if waiting for my turn. To hear only that any of my friends has a cough, alarms me now; and I look round upon them all with an anxious eye—which of them am I next to lose? * * *

TO MISS ELIZA FORBES.

COLCHESTER, *December 6th*, 1806.

* * And now will you allow me to call in question the accuracy and justice of some of your opinions,

though formed, as you assure me, on the accumulated experience of "three-score years and ten." I will not accuse you of doing the world injustice, for even the peep I have had at it convinces me that it is, as you say, "deceit and wickedness;" but surely there are *some* honest souls—some who are disinterested, open-hearted, and affectionate; at least, if it is not so—if those whom I have long thought it my greatest happiness to love, and whom my unbiassed judgment has taught me to respect and venerate, I ought rather to suspect and fear —I do not wish to be undeceived; I would rather be imposed upon ever so often, than endure the torture of a constant state of suspicion and jealousy. Yes, my dear Eliza, you must not deprive me of the pleasure of believing I have a real share in your affections; you must still allow me to think of you as a *friend*, without indulging a fear that you will violate the sacred title. The best use, I think, that we can make of the many instances of duplicity and insincerity which every day brings before our view, is to learn thereby to suspect ourselves; here, indeed, we cannot be too watchful, or too accurate in our examinations; but, alas! how much easier is it to decide upon the conduct and motives of others, than to weigh and analyse our own! and what abundant cause have we for deep humiliation, when we arrive at the springs of most of our best performances!

The result of such reflections as these I have found very satisfactory and decisive: I find that it is quite

in vain to attempt to perform any action, to think any thought, or to cultivate any amiable sentiment aright, unless it be done with a view to the glory of God, and with a humble dependence on His supporting hand: of this important truth every day brings fresh conviction to my mind. I have long mourned over my temper, naturally irritable and impatient: I have read of, and I have witnessed, examples of uniform sweetness and meekness of temper, which have at once made me blush at my own deficiencies, and stimulated me to those exertions which others have successfully made in conquering their evil propensities. I have therefore resolved to make a noble stand against the risings of my temper, whatever provocations might occur:—but alas! how feeble were those resolutions!—perhaps they yielded to the very first attack, and the work was all to be done anew. What then was to be done? Must I give all over; and suffer my ungoverned temper to prevail? No; but I must first seek assistance from One whose "strength is made perfect in our weakness," who is as able to still the storms of passion, as to say to the raging waves, "Peace, be still:"—I must not hope to be able to resist the temptations to anger or fretfulness of one short day, if I have not in the morning of that day prayed to be enabled to overcome evil. One had better forget to say, "Give us this day our daily bread," than to put up the fervent petition, "Lead me not into temptation."

But this is not all:—He who searches the heart will not afford me strength to overcome my temper, unless He sees a right motive urging me to attempt it. If I wish to be amiable for the same reason that I might wish to be accomplished, or beautiful; that is, that I may be admired, or beloved, or respected; can I hope for success? Oh no; if I be not actuated by an humble desire to obey the commands of God, and follow the bright example of Jesus Christ, by a hatred of all that is sinful, and an ardent desire to be "holy as He is holy," I must still strive and pray in vain. How does this increase the difficulty of the work, and show the absolute necessity of Divine assistance! Not that I think a modest wish to please can be sinful; indeed, without it, how can we ever expect to please; but this must not be the grand spring of action, unless we would prefer the approbation of our fellow-creatures to the favour of God. * * *

TO MISS S. L. CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *October 12th*, 1807.

* * * In the conversation we had together at Nayland, you may remember we lamented the trifling style into which we too often fall in our correspondence. It is undoubtedly a real evil, though a very common one: as in conversation, so in writing, it is easier to *chat* than to converse: it is easier to be *witty* than wise.

One can fill all sides of a sheet without stopping a minute, in such a way that one is quite ashamed to peruse it when done. If the mind is fatigued, or in an uncomfortable frame, what a labour it is to think! and, at such a time, one is under a strong temptation to give the pen a full licence—curbing it neither by reason nor conscience: and what a range will it take when thus left to itself! But my dear L., is not this making that useless, or at best a mere diversion, which might be highly beneficial? And is not a similar fault often chargeable upon personal intercourse? So seldom as we meet, and so short as are our interviews, what a pity that they should be trifled away! Whenever we have had a friend with us, I sigh to think that so few of the hours in which we have had their company have been occupied by anything like improving conversation. For our own parts, I think the fault may, in great measure, be traced to our taste for *drollery*. I have frequently regarded this propensity as a misfortune: especially as it is so rarely overcome. I am sure, my dear L., you have seen enough of it, and of its consequences, to make you think very much as I do on this subject. Does not a jest frequently put a stop to an interesting conversation, or dissipate a train of useful reflections? And do not droll turns of expression, or humorous associations, occasionally interfere even with our most serious engagements? Have not these ideas frequently occurred to you? But to what does all this tend? Why,

I hope to an endeavour towards reformation :—at any rate, I will try this time to write a letter without trifling.

In your last letter you just introduced the subject which ought to be more interesting to us than any other. It is strange, indeed, that those who are united in the bonds of friendship—as I hope, my dear L., we are, and ever shall be—and who profess to be journeying together on the same pilgrimage, towards the same happy home, should so rarely exchange a word, relative to the difficulties and the dangers of the way, and to the hope of future rest. It is strange: yet, it is what we see every day. That unfortunate reserve which closes the lips of so many people on the subject of religion—whence does it proceed? What other subject is there, however delicate, but what is sometimes introduced? But here our lips are sealed. I believe we do ourselves a great injury by indulging this temper. For my own part, though I believe few people feel this reluctance more powerfully than I have done, it has not been the cause of my silence so often as the discouraging or uncomfortable state of my mind. Oh, could we but *feel* as much as we *know* of the importance and excellency of religion—could we but retain a just impression of the vanity of even the most important of our earthly pursuits, how different would be our manners and conduct! But seeing things as we do, only through the medium of our beclouded senses, every object is distorted or reversed.

I have lately been reading Dr. Watts's discourses on the Happiness of Separate Spirits. It is impossible to peruse them without feeling an elevation of mind above the trifles of earth—without being inspired by the desire "to see and taste the bliss:"—but oh, how soon is the mind sensualized again—even before one fleeting hour is passed! How does the world flow in upon it again, after it has been for a while abstracted!

TO MR. JOSIAH CONDER.

(Uncertain date.)

It seems a long time since I held any converse with you; but I will not suffer that circumstance, especially as it is my own fault, to constrain me now, since I have every reason to believe you are the same Josiah whom I have been accustomed to address, and I, alas, remain too much like my former self! I was going to make some apology for what my letter may be, from the dulness of my present mood; but I am afraid you will be tired of this, since, according to my own account, I have never written my *best* letter—that, I hope, will not be composed for a good while to come, and as I may never know *which* it is when it comes. How true is our kind friend M—'s remark respecting writing and answering letters. How often have I felt and lamented it as I found the thoughts and feelings awakened by a welcome letter, gradually fading

away ere I could secure them, and especially when I find they are irrecoverably gone at the moment when they are most wanted; but as this is an inconvenience common to us all, I have no right to make louder complaints than my neighbours. I would now gladly copy for you those grateful and eloquent compositions which saw the light, occasioned by your last letters; but as they are quite gone and have left in this bewildered brain "no vestige but is fled," you must put up as usual with the dull uninspired production of my manufactory. * * * * * Well, then, what do you say to my being quite a convert? Shall I tell you that I am perfectly satisfied with my talents, that however injured and slighted by my envious contemporaries, I feel convinced that posterity will do me justice? That I feel confident in my own powers—would you believe it? Well, then, shall I tell you a more probable story? That I am tired of wishing to be clever, that especially I am weary of the sickening, fatiguing struggle for competition, with such unequal forces:—a sling and a stone, or the jaw-bone of an ass, unless wielded by a David or a Samson, will not do. But I did not intend to trifle; you did not, I am sure, expect your excellent letter should make any material alteration in my opinion or feeling of myself; yet it was cheering and encouraging, and this was all you hoped it would be. * * * *

CHAPTER VII.

LITERARY ENGAGEMENTS AND RELIGIOUS FEELINGS.

JANE was at this time employed conjointly with her sister, upon some little works to which their names have never been attached. To this indeed they were always extremely reluctant; and they yielded their names only when it was no longer within their option to withhold them. It may be added, that, if publicity was not sought for by my sisters, neither were they incited by any prospects of considerable pecuniary advantage; for, with one or two exceptions, the authors' share of the profits arising from the sale of their works never amounted in their early years to a sum which, if they had been dependent upon their exertions in this line, could have afforded them a comfortable subsistence. I feel it to be due to my sister's memory—and not to *her* memory alone—thus explicitly to contradict a supposition entertained, I believe, by some persons, that the very extensive sale of their works was the source of a large income to the authors; this was far from being the fact in the early years of their course.

In pecuniary matters Jane was, at once, provident, exact, and liberal; but her tastes and habits made her utterly averse to the care of accumulating money. Her feelings in writing were dissociated from the idea of gain; and she would neither personally interfere to secure what she might deem her rights, nor suffer her mind to be long disturbed by solicitudes of this sort. She received, with gratitude to the Giver of all good, whatever share she actually obtained of the proceeds of her writing, and strove, as far as possible, to put away from her thoughts the disquieting recollection of what that share might have been. Often have I heard her break off a conversation on pecuniary matters, by an exclamation of this kind—"Ah well, it is God who determines what I am to have; and if I were to gain all that I might fairly gain, He would know how, in other ways, to reduce the amount to the exact sum at which He sees best to fix my income."

The success of her first attempt to write for the press administered no more stimulus to my sister's mind than her diffidence needed. Still she considered herself as merely filling up a subordinate part; and it was with no feigned humility that, in addressing her sister, she says—

"My Ann, you had taken the lyre;
And I, from the pattern you set,
Attempted the art to acquire;
And often we play a duet.

But those who, in grateful return,
Have said they were pleased with the lay,
The discord could always discern;
And yet I continued to play."

The second volume of "Original Poems" met with as much favour as the first;—both volumes were soon reprinted in America, and have, to the present time, continued there, as well as in England, to be very generally used in families.

From the period of which I am now speaking, the history of my sister's mind will be best given by herself, in the extracts from her Correspondence; and it will only be necessary to furnish such connecting facts as may render intelligible the perusal of the selected letters. The sound good sense which has recommended the later productions of her pen, began then to temper the sprightliness of her fancy; and the letters of each succeeding year will exhibit a very marked progression in this respect; for not only did her understanding ripen, but the false diffidence by which it had been shackled was gradually removed by the successful exercise of her talents. In some young persons self-confidence occasions the precocious development of the reasoning powers; while in others, a morbid diffidence retards their expansion, and even occasions a certain jejuneness of style long after the substance of thought has become worthy of mature years. This was very much the case with my sister:—

if earlier in life she had believed herself possessed of the powers she afterwards displayed, she might have laboured in a wider and higher sphere. She continued to address herself to children, not merely because she thought that to be the work for which she was best fitted; but in great measure because, within this humble sphere, she felt herself safe; and that, while she moved not out of it, the dreaded charge of presumption could not be brought against her. On many of the most important topics of religion, morals, and manners, she thought justly, and felt strongly: and she probably only needed the conviction that she could gain the attention of adult readers, in order to do so with success. But though representations of this kind were often made to her, she could never be prevailed upon to make the attempt.

The little volume of "Rhymes for the Nursery," appeared not long after the "Original Poems:"—to this volume no one but my sisters contributed. Their aim was to present ideas, and to awaken emotions, in a form adapted to the earliest childhood. The question which the authors proposed in their preface—"Whether ideas adapted to the comprehension of infancy admit the restrictions of rhyme and metre"—seems now to be pretty well determined in the affirmative; for it may be said to have been "carried by acclamation" from thousands of infant voices, that rhyme and metre are the friends of infancy; and that far from being "restrictions"

upon the communication of ideas, they open the avenues of intellect more readily than any other means. Experience proves that poetry itself, as distinguished from mere rhyme and metre, though not fully apprehended by the mind of a child, has truly a charm for it. Those who have been engaged in the instruction of the children of the poor, will grant it to be a fact, that if children of active minds are allowed to make their own selection of hymns to be committed to memory, they will for the most part choose rather such as have something of the spirit of poetry in them, than others which might have seemed better adapted to their comprehension, by being altogether prosaic in their style. The "Rhymes for the Nursery," though in phraseology brought down to a lower level, are, many of them, more poetical in their character than the "Original Poems;" and it is believed that the success of the one has been, at least, fully equal to that of the other.

Jane's literary pursuits were facilitated about this time, and her comfort much increased, by the appropriation of a room to her exclusive use, which she fitted up to her own taste. This attic was secluded from the rest of the house; the window commanded a view of the country, and of a "tract of sky" as a field for that nightly soaring of the fancy of which she was so fond. Our parents always considered the exclusive occupation of a chamber, or study, by each of their family, as a most important advantage, both for the cultivation of the mind, and the

cherishing of devotional habits. So far as it was possible, we were all favoured in this respect; and Jane was always forward to avail herself of the privilege. Addressing a literary friend, she thus describes her study:—

"My verses have certainly one advantage to boast, beyond any that ever escaped from my pen heretofore—that of being composed in my own study. Whether instigated by the sight of your retired literarium, or what, I cannot exactly tell; but certain it is, that one of my first engagements, on my return home, was to fit up an unoccupied attic, hitherto devoted only to household lumber; this I removed by the most spirited exertions, and supplied its place by all the apparatus necessary for a poet, which, you know, is not of a very extensive nature: a few book-shelves, a table for my writing-desk, one chair for myself, and another for my muse, is a pretty accurate inventory of my furniture. But though my study cannot boast the elegance of yours, it possesses one advantage which, as a poet, you ought to allow, surpasses them all—it commands a view of the country—the only room in the house, except one, which is thus favoured; and to me this is invaluable. You may now expect me to do wonders! But even if others should derive no advantages from this new arrangement, to me, I am sure, they will be numerous. For years I have been longing for such a luxury, and never before had wit enough to think of this convenient place. It will add so much to the comfort of my life, that I can do nothing but con-

gratulate myself upon the happy thought; and I demand a large share of your poetical sympathy on the occasion. Although it is morning, and, I must tell you, but little past six, I have half filled this sheet, which capability I attribute chiefly to the sweet fields that are now smiling in vernal beauty before me."

There is reason to believe that the advantage of being able to fulfil, literally, the command "to enter into the closet, and shut the door," was not slighted; but that devotional exercises were more regularly attended to by my sister, from this time, from which, it is believed, an advance in her religious feelings may be dated; though she still fell short of the peace and hope which become Christian faith. Nevertheless, the native soundness of her judgment showed itself when she was called to animadvert upon any morbid sentiments expressed by her young friends, as may be seen from the following letter:—

TO MISS E. FORBES.

COLCHESTER, 1807.

* * * In your last you again introduce the subject of worldly amusements; and if I am not mistaken, this is neither the first nor the second time you have done so; and that in an argumentative style, as though our opinions were at variance. Now I really apprehend that we think as nearly alike on these points as one could reasonably wish; and I think if you were to

examine some of my former letters, in which the subject has been discussed, you would find I acquiesce with you, at least in your most important objections. I cannot think what has given you the idea so strongly, that I am an advocate for the pleasures of the theatre; unless it be, my having been persuaded, five years ago, to attend it one evening; and though, certainly, I am not aware of having sustained any material injury, either to my moral or spiritual feelings, I have ever since decidedly resolved never to repeat the visit: and I hope you will believe me when I once again assure you that I do disapprove of such amusements; and should think it very dangerous, and exceedingly wrong, to be in the habit of frequenting them. You mention novels—you have read one or two here, and may conclude we are in the continual habit of perusing them. I believe, in all my life, I have read, and heard read, about a dozen—it may be, twenty; and though I think it injudicious to suffer very young girls to read even a good novel, if there be love in it, yet I must maintain the opinion that most, or many of those I have read, were of a beneficial, and not of a hurtful tendency. I would as soon read some of Miss Edgeworth's, or Miss Hamilton's novels, with a view to moral improvement, as Foster's Essays; and I have too high an opinion of your good sense and liberality, to suppose that, after a candid perusal of these, and some few other good novels (for the number of good ones I readily allow to be very small), you would repeat that,

"to read them was incompatible with love to God." You oblige me to recur to a hackneyed argument, that the abuse of a thing should not set aside its use.

Do not say I am pleading for an indiscriminate indulgence in novel reading, or a *frequent* perusal of the very best of novels; that, in common with every innocent recreation, may be easily carried to a hurtful excess: but you seem to me to fancy some fatal spell to attend the very name of *novel*, in a way that we should smile at, as narrow-minded and ignorant, in an uneducated person: all I wish you to admit—all I think myself is, that it is a possible thing for a book to be written, bearing the general form, appearance, and name of a *novel*, in the cause of virtue, morality, and religion; and then, that to read such a book is by no means "incompatible with love to God," or in the least displeasing in His sight. I think you will not hesitate to admit this, and then we exactly agree in our opinions of "plays and novels." That plays, and bad novels, are "poisons which Satan frequently insinuates" with too great success, I have no more doubt of than yourself. Yet, if I am not mistaken, he has some still more potent venoms;—if I might judge from myself, there are ways, in the most private life, in domestic scenes, in solitary retirements, by which Satan can as effectually operate on the heart, as in a crowded theatre. I believe I might read a hundred novels, and attend as many plays, and have my heart less drawn from God, than by those common pursuit

and interests which, while it would be sinful to avoid them, I cannot engage in without sin. It is in the realities of life, and not merely in the fictions that occasionally amuse us, that I find the most baneful poisons, the most effectual weaners from "love to God."

I think many people "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel," in these very circumstances; and Satan willingly suffers them to abstain with holy horror from the theatre, or to throw aside a novel with abhorrence, so the idol—the real idol he has erected in their hearts, receive its daily worship. You cannot suppose I am bringing this forward by way of argument for the one or the other; but it always appears to me that people begin at the wrong end, when they attack such errors as these. One might as well expect to demolish a building by pulling down some external ornament, while the pillars were left unmoved; and I think many who exclaim with vehemence against those who indulge in some of the vain pleasures of the world (for which, probably, themselves have no relish, and from which, therefore, it costs them little self-denial to abstain), would do well to examine if there be not some favourite idol within their own breasts, equally displeasing in the sight of a heart-searching God. I do not say this to *you*, dear Eliza. I know that you watch your heart, as well as your conduct; and earnestly desire to guard it in every quarter from the incursions of the wily adversary; and while you have abundant occasion to warn me of that worldly-mindedness which I desire

daily to mourn over and to mortify, I hope your anxiety for me, "as one who reads novels, and tolerates the frequenting of plays," will be abated, at least. I will discuss the subject with you as often as you please; but do not again employ your time in arguing me out of opinions which I ever discarded. * * *

A similar strain of good sense appears in the following passages:—

"Those," she says in a letter to a friend, "who are in the habit of reading their own hearts, know that the heart may be as devotedly fixed on what is in itself a truly worthy and proper object of regard, as on the sinful vanities of the world: and, if that object be anything but God, its intrinsic value diminishes nothing from the idolatry of the feeling. Perhaps I need not blush to enumerate those worldly pleasures on which my heart is most intent: but I know I ought to blush, could I disclose the high, monopolizing place they hold there:—they reign;—when will these idols fall before the ark of God? Are they to be torn from their hiding-place, as yours have been? Oh! why have I not had this trial rather than you?

"You have well described the difficulty, the exertion, requisite for real and fervent prayer. I am glad that I do know the difference between that and the offering of lifeless petitions: you rightly affirm that 'true prayer surpasses every other mental exercise, and

is entirely beyond human attainment, without Divine aid.' Certainly, no one ever prayed who was not a Christian; but, though sometimes I have found every faculty, for a few moments, intently engaged in the exercise, how can I hope that this was really prayer, when I remember the indifference, the coldness, the reluctance, that characterise the general state of my mind. Yet, in the midst of the darkness that surrounds my own mind, I rejoice, my dear friend, in the light which shines upon yours."

How far this want of the comfort which religion can afford, might have been attributed to an obscured apprehension of "the hope set before us in the Gospel," is a question worthy of inquiry:—that it was not the consequence of cynical feelings or habits will be made apparent by a quotation from a letter addressed to a friend, whose mind was in some degree perverted by sentiments of that sort:—

"In a certain sense, I may say with you, 'that my views of life are dark and melancholy:' yet I believe when you say so, you mean something more than I do. You do not permit yourself to receive the comforts and delights that are offered you by Providence with 'a merry heart, giving God thanks.' Now, I think that though, when compared with heavenly happiness, the best joys of earth should appear mean and trifling in our eyes; yet, considered in themselves, as they were given for our enjoyment, surely a cheerful and grateful delight in

them, must be even acceptable to our all-bountiful Father. When we survey all our comforts—a happy home, affectionate friends, easy circumstances, and the numerous train of common mercies and social delights, ought we to call the prospect 'dark and melancholy'? Surely, the cheerful song of praise befits us better than the sigh of discontent. Do not suppose I would plead for the gay amusements and dangerous pleasures of the world. I am as firmly convinced of their evil tendency as you can be: and would avoid them as carefully. I am referring only to the natural comforts and lawful enjoyments of life; and even of these I would say, that we must still 'hold them as if we held them not; and use them as not abusing them.'"

The same order of sentiment appears in a letter of consolation, addressed to this friend, soon afterward, on the death of a beloved brother. "Afflictions rightly improved, are indeed blessings; yet, how apt are we to abuse them by receiving impressions very different from what they were intended to produce. I mention this from a fear that, notwithstanding your cheerful acquiescence in the Divine will, you do, in a degree, mistake the intentions of Providence. I hear your cough is become habitual, and that you firmly expect, and almost wish, to join your dear brother soon. Now, I am persuaded, it is not merely from a selfish motive that I would say, Do not court death; but, I am sure, it is the language of reason, and the voice of duty. It

cannot be a wholesome state of mind, even in the midst of the severest trials, when it is looking to death as a relief. The holy desire 'to depart, and to be with Christ,' is very different from the desire to depart, that we may be with some dear friend, a desire which can arise only from a worldly principle. In sending these sorrows, God usually intends to fit us for living more to His glory here below; and though they certainly contain a loud warning to 'prepare to meet our God,' as we know not how soon our turn may come, it is showing a degree of impatience under them to say—'I cannot bear the separation, let *me* die also.'. Let me intreat you then, my dear E., to take great and constant care of your health, for vain is the attention of your friends, unless you join your own endeavours; especially restrain yourself from that ardent pursuit of whatever happens to engage your present interest, which, I am very sure, has greatly undermined your health already, and which, if persisted in, will assuredly destroy it. May your soul also prosper! I shall rejoice to hear that you have been led by this affliction, more confidently than ever, 'to lay hold of the only hope set before us.'"

Unconsciously to herself, a real progression appears, from her letters, to have been taking place in Jane's religious feelings; and, if not more happy in hope, she became more established in principle. In a letter of an earlier date than the last, she says—

"Well, I hope I can say I have different views of life,

and a higher ambition than formerly. I dare not trust my treacherous heart a moment. But yet, upon examination, I think I may say, I should feel at least contented to pass silently and soberly through the world, with a humble hope of reaching heaven at the end of my pilgrimage. I have many, many difficulties in my way; and, when I compare the state of my mind with that which is required of those who follow Jesus, and see how much must be done ere I can attain it, I have no other comfort than this—'With God all things are possible.' Yes, indeed, my dear Eliza, we have each of us dangerous snares to avoid, and, as you say, temptations to love the world. But I well know, and with shame I would allow it, that yours are far more inviting, and require more courage and self-denial to resist, than mine: yet, you may escape, and I become the victim. With half your graces and accomplishments, what should I have been! You mention talents;—but indeed you mistake in supposing that the accidental success that has attended my feeble efforts, has been very hurtful to me. I wish I had no worse enemies than my wits. I do not deny—it would be ungrateful to do so—that the approbation we have met with, and the applause, especially of some whose opinion was particularly precious, have been sources of constant satisfaction: and perhaps, occasionally, my weak mind has been partly overset by them. Yet, I think I may say, my humiliations have generally counterbalanced such feelings, and kept my

mind *in equilibrio.* No, though I own my muse has done me a few good turns, for which I shall always feel grateful: yet she has been the means of procuring me as many good, wholesome mortifications as any personage, real or ideal, that I know of. I do not say all this to prove that I am not vain, for I am; if I were not, you know, I should not be liable to mortifications, nor have I yet thrown aside my pen in disgust, though I have many a time longed to do so."

These counteractive feelings were brought into play at times when Ann and Jane—now authors—were introduced into new circles. Their mother says—

"Desirous that our daughters should enjoy some recreation and suspension from their labours, they were allowed, alternately, an annual visit to London, among old friends, and where they gained some new ones. They had acquired by this time a degree of literary reputation: but as they had nothing to introduce them as persons in affluent circumstances, their reception, as in all similar cases, was regulated by the feelings and dispositions of those to whom they were introduced. And, while some treated them with cordiality and friendship, others favoured them with that amiable condescension which is so current in the world, and is equally intelligible to many of those who are 'honoured with it.'"

Jane's letters about this time, when notoriety as an author was new to her, abound with similar sentiments.

"We have been visiting some friends in the country, who correspond with the description you give of yours. They possess that natural intelligence, sound sense, and intrinsic excellence, which cannot fail to render them interesting, though deficient in cultivation, and unpolished in matters of taste. Now, among these friends, our poor superficial acquirements blaze away most splendidly. But though I am conscious of feeling elated at such times, yet it is checked by a humiliating sense of my real inferiority. I see them living in the daily exercise of virtues and graces to which I never approached. In all that is sound, sterling, durable—in all that a heart-searching God can approve, I see how far I fall short; and then, how contemptible and worthless is all in which I may have the advantage. Although that degree of vanity which amounts to conceit, and obvious and obtrusive self-complacency, must, I think, be absolutely incompatible with dignity and refinement of mind, as well as with the Christian graces; yet, where is the heart, in which, in a state more or less subdued, it exists not? And those who are wont to speak and think mainly of themselves—who are willing to prefer others to themselves—and who are continually deploring their deficiencies, yet, after all, evince great ignorance of their own hearts, if they imagine that, beneath all this humiliation, no seeds of vanity lie concealed; in truth, they may spring up nowhere more luxuriantly than in the soil that is watered by the tears

of self-condemnation. With respect to this baleful weed, it may with peculiar propriety be said—

> 'We cannot bear diviner fruit,
> Till grace refine the ground.'

Here is the only remedy—religion, and religion only, can humble the proud spirit in the dust."

Jane's intimate friends were not ignorant of the embarrassed state of her religious feelings; nor were they backward in affording to her the directions and encouragement she seemed to require. These offices of Christian friendship were acknowledged by her with lively affection.

"With feelings of sincere gratitude and love, I would again thank you, my very dear Anne, for the tender concern you manifested on my behalf; and the readiness with which you afforded the advice and encouragement I solicited. You are highly privileged, dear Anne, in having it in your power to promote pleasure and cheerfulness wherever you appear. Your visit was truly a season of sunshine; and how sweetly refreshing are such occasional gleams, breaking forth from a clouded sky—and such indeed is mine. I could bear the roughness of the road, if it were but bright overhead: however, I dare not turn back; and you, dear Anne, while going on your way rejoicing, will not, I am sure, be unmindful of your benighted friend. It may be long before we meet again; but my heart has been accustomed to love the absent, and my thoughts have been trained to fly

towards every point of the compass: and whether at ——, or at ——, they will frequently attend you, laden with sincere affection."

In reply to a letter of religious consolation and advice, addressed, about this time, to Jane by another friend, she says:—

"I have already thanked you for a letter received two months ago; but I have yet to assure you, of what you seem to entertain a doubt—that the principal subject of it was very far from being uninteresting or unwelcome to me. I own, indeed, I do feel a backwardness in introducing these topics; and that, as you say, greatly arising from a false shame, that ought not to be encouraged. But I have other impediments; and if I cannot speak with entire freedom on religious subjects, it is not, indeed, because I cannot 'confide in you;' but for want of confidence in myself. I dread much more than total silence, falling into a common-place, technical style of expression, without real meaning and feeling; and thereby, deceiving both myself and others. I well know how ready my friends are to give me encouragement, and how willing to hope the best concerning me; and as I cannot open to them the secret recesses of my heart, they put a too favourable construction on my expressions. You will not, then impute it to a want of confidence, though I cannot speak otherwise than generally on this subject. . . . Yet I do hope that I have of late seen something of the vanity of the world, and

increasingly feel that it cannot be my rest. The companions of my youth are no more: our own domestic circle is breaking up: time seems every day to fly with increased rapidity; and must I not say 'the world recedes.' Under these impressions, I would seek consolation where only I know it is to be found. I long to be able to make heaven and eternity the home of my thoughts, to which, though they must often wander abroad on other concerns, they may regularly return, and find their best entertainment. But I always indulge with fear and self-suspicion in these most interesting contemplations; and doubtless, the enjoyments arising from them belong rather to the advanced Christian, than to the doubting, wandering beginner. I am afraid I feel poetically, rather than piously, on these subjects; and while I am indulging in vain conjectures on the employments and enjoyments of a future state, I must envy the humble Christian who, with juster views, and better claims, is longing 'to depart and be with Christ.' Nor would I mistake a fretful impatience with the fatigues and crosses of life, for a temper weaned from the world. I could, indeed, sometimes say—

> 'I long to lay this painful head,
> And aching heart, beneath the soil;
> To slumber in that dreamless bed;
> From all my toil.'

And I have felt too those lines—

> 'The bitter tear—the arduous struggle ceases here—
> The doubt, the danger, and the fear,
> All, all, for ever o'er.'

But these feelings, though they may afford occasional relief, I could not indulge in."

The extracts from her correspondence will be found to exhibit, again and again, the same constitutional feelings, but counterpoised, as her character matured, by a firmer faith, and a brighter hope. Yet the improvement took place so insensibly that its immediate causes are difficult to ascertain. At the time the above cited letters were written, no advice, perhaps, no representations of the simplicity and certainty of that offer of happiness which is made to us in the Scriptures, would have availed to dispel the gloom and discomfort of my sister's mind; for constitutional feelings are with difficulty uprooted. She nevertheless knew how to address consolations to her suffering friends.

TO MISS M. HOLMAN.

COLCHESTER, *December 11th*, 1807.

It would be to me a most delightful and gratifying task to address you, my dear M., on this occasion, did I believe it to be in my power to speak to your deeply wounded spirit the language of real consolation; but I feel forcibly the insignificancy and inefficacy of empty words, in a case of such sad reality: and I own the task would be only painful, were I not fulfilling your kind request.

If it be consolatory to be persuaded that we do not mourn alone and disregarded, but that in our tears and sorrows we have the deep sympathy of a friend, then,

indeed, my dear M., you may receive all the consolation such a persuasion can bestow. To a mind so well stored as yours with religious principles, and so well regulated by them, it would be superfluous to enumerate those sources of comfort which the word of God presents to the mourning Christian. Nor would it indeed become me, being sensible how far I fall short of your attainments in this respect; and I am very sure you are daily receiving these lessons of pious resignation from your dear and excellent father. Have you not, dear M., felt something of the "joy of grief," and that too in a better sense than the poet intends, in the feeling of having a new tie to the heavenly world, while one of the strongest cords that bound your soul to this, is broken. Cowper beautifully rejoices in being the son of parents "passed into the skies." It is indeed a most inspiring idea, and those who have a good, well-founded hope of the happiness of their departed friends, cannot be inconsolable at the separation. A friend, who has lately lost a beloved brother, says, in a letter just received: "We are always happy in the idea that our dear brother is in heaven." This is the privilege of Christians—this is indeed a joy that the world knows not of. Oh, how can those who are without hope, either for themselves or for their friends, support the weight of such a stroke! They are obliged to plunge into gaieties for a refuge from reflection. But how poor a substitute are these for the consolations of religion! * * * *

CHAPTER VIII.

CORRESPONDENCE ON GENERAL SUBJECTS—DOMESTIC FEELINGS.

TO MISS E. FORBES.

COLCHESTER, *February 14th*, 1808.

NOTHING less, my dear Eliza, than your actual presence could, I believe, just now rouse me from the stupor of a long evening's application. I always grow quite rusty in the winter, and almost forget that the world reaches farther than from one end of the house to the other. Not but that my thoughts take an occasional flight to regions more remote; but they stretch so far into the blue distance, that I can scarcely tell whether they arrive at realities, or rest upon vapour and illusion. You, who have seen us only in the summer, when we are never so regular in our movements, can scarcely form an idea of the retirement and uninterrupted regularity of our winter life. We seem more like the possessors of some lone castle in the bosom of the

mountains, than the inhabitants of a populous town. Yet, do not imagine me showing a deplorable face through the grates of my prison, and longing to break forth into the gay world. I assure you I enjoy this retirement—this peaceful and happy home, where my heart and my happiness are centred. When I look round at the dear and yet unbroken circle, I reproach myself if ever I have indulged a feeling of fretfulness —that the glow of thankfulness should ever forsake my heart. Yet we have troubles and anxieties that will sometimes destroy cheerfulness. But I feel persuaded that, however I may feel their pressure now, I shall never know happier days than these. And one advantage I have, which must soon forsake me—I am still young; and feel occasionally that flow of spirits—that bounding joy of heart—which ever attends the spring of life. The spirits may indeed be depressed, but they will rise again; and I have often been surprised to feel not only cheerfulness, but hilarity, returning to my heart from no apparent cause, and when circumstances which had plunged me in dejection remained unchanged.

TO MR. JOSIAH CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *May 19th*, 1808.

* * * You still ask me to define a compliment: I thought we had agreed that praise bestowed upon real merit, sanctioned by the honest judgment, and

administered temperately, ought not to be termed a *compliment.* Whenever praise exceeds the above-mentioned limits, it deserves no better name. Now I fear that unless we have courage to violate the common laws of good-breeding, we must all acknowledge ourselves to be faulty in this respect. Indeed, it seems to depend more upon the character of our associates than upon ourselves, to what degree we offend. I have friends whom I cannot compliment; and I have acquaintances whom, unless I transgress these laws, I must needs compliment whenever I am in their company. In this view, if I have accused you of such a practice, I am willing to take the blame upon myself. And I will consider myself bound, for your sake as well as for my own, better to merit those commendations which neither your politeness could entirely withhold, nor my vanity wholly dispense with. It is difficult to distinguish accurately between an honest desire to please, and that poisonous love of admiration which acts rather as a cloy than a stimulus to mental improvement,—to judge between a laudable ambition to excel, and a vain and selfish desire to outshine others. How many mortifications should we escape, if we were always more solicitous to deserve the love of a few valued friends, than to excite general admiration! A proud indifference to the opinion of the world is no amiable feeling. But to be independent of its smiles, by valuing chiefly the sweets of inward tranquillity, is indeed a most

desirable state of mind—only to be attained by cultivating the best principles, and by seeking approbation from the highest source. * * * *

TO MISS S. L. CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *June 2d*, 1808.

* * * We have already had some delightful evening rambles. When we are all out together on these happy occasions, I forget all my troubles, and feel as light-hearted as I can remember I used to do some seven or eight years ago, when I scarcely knew what was meant by depression. If I should ever lose my relish for these simple pleasures—if I thought, by growing older, my feelings would no longer be alive to them, I should be ready, indeed, to cling to youth, and petition old Time to take a little rest, instead of working so indefatigably, night and day, upon me. But, alas! he is such a persevering old fellow, that nothing can hinder him: one must needs admire his industry, even though one may now and then be a little provoked with his obstinacy. But seriously, it is not right to shrink from age, much less from maturity; and could I be sure of retaining some of my present ideas, feelings, and sentiments, and of parting only with those that are vain and childish, I think I could welcome its near approach with a tolerably good grace. But I dread finding a chilling indifference steal gradually upon me for some of my pursuits and plea-

sures which have hitherto been most dear to me—an indifference which I think I have observed in some in the meridian of life. I am always, therefore, delighted to discover, in people of advancing years, any symptoms of their being still susceptible of such enjoyments; and in this view the letters of Mrs. Grant afforded me peculiar gratification: increasing years seem to have deprived her of no rational enjoyment. If time clipped a little the wings of her fancy, she was still able to soar above the common pleasures of a mere housewife;—no reflection, by-the-by, upon that respectable character; believe me, I reverence it, and always regard with respect a woman who performs her difficult, complicated, and important duties with address and propriety. Yet I see no reason why the best housewife in the world should take more pleasure in making a curious pudding, than in reading a fine poem; or feel a greater pride in setting out an elegant table, than in producing a well-trained child. I perfectly glory in the undeniable example Mrs. Grant exhibits of a woman filling up all the duties of her domestic station with peculiar activity and success, and at the same time cultivating the minds of her children usefully and elegantly; and still allowing herself to indulge occasionally in the most truly rational of all pleasures—the pleasures of intellect.

I daresay you read a paper in the *Christian Observer* for April, on Female Cultivation. I feel grateful to the sensible and liberally-minded author. I do believe the

reason why so few men, even among the intelligent, wish to encourage the mental cultivation of women, is their excessive love of the *good things* of this life; they tremble for their dear stomachs, concluding that a woman who could taste the pleasures of poetry or sentiment, would never descend to pay due attention to those exquisite flavours in pudding or pie, that are so gratifying to their philosophic palates; and yet, poor gentlemen, it is a thousand pities they should be so much mistaken; for after all, who so much as a woman of sense and cultivation, will feel the real importance of domestic duties; or who will so well, so cheerfully, perform them? * * *

TO MR. JOSIAH CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *February 21st*, 1809.

* * * Mr. James Montgomery is the principal subject of your last letter. I have felt quite impatient to add my thanks to those Ann has, I believe, already presented, for your truly friendly exertions to introduce us to his notice; for as your interviews were few, and occupied by much more interesting discourse, to remember two obscure country rhymers was very kind; and so we feel it. As to his remarks on our books, they cannot be otherwise than gratifying. We feel all the difference between such an opinion, expressed by a man of taste and genius, and the customary compliment of "Sweet pretty things, ladies—they do you great credit," &c.

I regret he did not leave room to find fault. We are fully conscious that we deserve it. When we first wrote, we were not in the habit of taking pains; that is to say, we were not aware what pains were necessary; neither did we know what we had at stake; consequently our earliest productions abound with inaccuracies. Parents are pleased with them, because their children are; but from Mr. Montgomery, who is neither a little boy nor a father, I had not expected so favourable a critique. But since it would ill become me to question his judgment or taste, the small portion of his praise which I take to my own share affords me solid satisfaction.

Alas! if a poor wight has ever had the misfortune to hit upon two words that jingle, what a craving appetite is created; and he is, perhaps, doomed to endure perpetual starvation, or at best to derive a scanty and precarious subsistence from crumbs of praise: though it is as delicious to his palate (and even more so from its rarity) as to that of the favoured bard who receives it as his daily bread. But while I must confess that I have felt the appetite, I can say with sincerity that my happiness does not depend upon dainties of this sort, and that I can live contentedly upon plainer food. I wish to be thankful that I can find enjoyment in simple pleasures, and such as are, so far as I can discover, purified from the dross of selfishness and vanity. I am pleased to look within, and find that I am really happy when our complete family circle is formed, and useful and interesting

conversation arises and circulates. Memory can recall many livelier scenes, and fancy could present others still gayer, but neither memory nor fancy can persuade me to be discontented with the present. The loss of every external source of happiness, by the death of our early friends here, forced us to seek it in its native soil. I loved home, but I knew not how to value and enjoy it; and to the beauties of nature, though blooming around me, I was blind. I am surprised when, looking back only a few years, I remember how totally insensible I was to those scenes which are now constant sources of delight; though I should have been not a little startled had my taste and feeling been questioned—I, who have spent many a summer's evening on the old ivy-grown town wall, reading Thomson to the friend of my bosom; and would strain my eyes till they ached, that I might read by moonlight! But now, though I confess I prefer the convenience of a commodious apartment, and willingly endure the gross vapours of tallow, and the barbarism of artificial light; yet, I flatter myself, I know better how to enjoy the glowing landscape, as well as to taste the beauties of the poet; and that I contemplate the fair face of the moon with sensations not only more rational, but more pleasurable, than in those days of idle romance. That I have an eye to see, and a heart to feel, the beauties of nature, I acknowledge with gratitude, because they afford me constant and unsatiating pleasure, and form almost my only recreation. And I indulge the

hope that, having acquired a love for these simple enjoyments, I shall never lose it; but that in seasons of solitude or of sorrow, I shall continue to find a sweet solace in them. When I am low in spirits, weary, or cross—or especially when worried by some of the teasing realities of life, one glance at the landscape from the window of my attic never fails to produce a salutary effect upon me. And when "'tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more,"—if moon, planet, or star, condescends to beam through my casement, I revive under its benign influence. Many might smile at this, especially as I have renounced the title of romantic, and claim that of rational, for my pleasures; but I beg you will not. As a Londoner, I might apologize for dwelling on such a theme; but to a poet I cannot; and though to a correspondent I ought to apologize for so much egotism, to a friend I need not.

The infant smiles of spring have, perhaps, inspired me with this effusion: its return is always reviving and cheering; and while all around is gay and young, we forget that *our* winter has approached a step nearer. I am sometimes startled when I recollect that very probably half my allotted days are already spent; and possibly much more. Years that once appeared such long and tedious periods, now seem to fly onward with such rapidity, that they are gone ere they can be enjoyed or improved. Yet a few, at most, of these fleeting seasons, and I, and all I love, shall be forgotten on

earth. You have heard, doubtless, that we have lost our friend Mrs. Stapleton. Thus, we see a family nearly extinct, in which, but a few years ago, was centred all that was interesting and dear to us. We have no juvenile recollections with which they are not connected; and the much valued friendships we have formed in later years have not effaced those early impressions. It is difficult to realize such losses. And it is not these alone: for of a gay and happy circle, with whom we were intimately connected, Ann and I are the only survivors. * * *

In the course of the year 1809, our long-united family was separated, by the removal of two of its members to London; and, if the expressions of regret on this subject, with which Jane's letters abound, were to be quoted, they would seem to many readers to go beyond the necessities of the occasion. But none of her feelings were more vivid than those of family affection; and, almost blind to the reason of the case, she would fain have held the endeared circle entire, at the cost of all secular interests. "I regard," she says, "this separation, as one of the greatest sorrows I have ever known. I cannot view it merely as a parting with a friend, whom I may hope to meet again in a few months; for though our interviews may be frequent, our separation as companions is final. We are to travel different roads; and all the time we may actually pass together, in the course

'of occasional meetings, during our whole future lives, may not amount to more than a year or two of constant intercourse."

This foreboding was falsified by the event; for, in fact, only a year or two of separation took place between Jane and the brother to whom she here refers: —excepting that short interval, it was his happiness to be the constant companion of her life.

In a letter written to her brothers, Isaac and Martin, soon after their leaving home, she says—"Oh this cruel separation! It would have killed me to have known when first we parted, how complete it would be. I am glad we deceived ourselves with the hope of keeping up frequent intercourse by letters and visits; it saved us a severer pang than any we then endured. These painful reflections are revived by the disappointment of our fond hopes of a speedy reunion, which is now rendered not only distant, but very doubtful. You, engaged in business, and surrounded by friends, cannot feel as we do on this subject. We have nothing to do but to contemplate our cheerless prospects, or to think of the days that are past. I do not mean it reproachfully when I say, that you will soon learn to do without us; it is the natural consequence of your situation, and we ought to be reconciled to the 'common lot.' But how can I forget the happy years in which we were everything to each other? I am sometimes half jealous of our friends, especially of ———, who now has that

confidence which we once enjoyed. But I will not proceed in this mournful strain: and do not think, my dear brothers, that I am charging you with neglect, or any decrease of affection; though I do sometimes anticipate, and that with a bitter regret, the natural effect of a long-continued separation."

So eminently characteristic of my sister's mind were feelings of this sort, that I must exhibit them in one or two further quotations from her letters to her brothers.

"We have not yet tried separation long enough to know what its effects will eventually be. I dread lest, in time, we should become so accustomed to it, as to feel contented to live apart, and forget the pleasure of our former intercourse; and I cannot suffer myself to believe what, after all, is most probable, that we shall never be united again. It is a forlorn idea; for what will two or three flying visits in the course of the year amount to? Life is short, and we perhaps half-way through it already. Well, I ought to be thankful that we have passed so large a portion of it in company, and that the best part, too; and, as to the future, if I could be sure that years of separation would not in the least estrange our affections from each other, and that the glow which warms the youthful breast would never be chilled by our passage through a cold, heartless world, I would be content. But the idea of becoming such brothers and sisters as we see everywhere, is incomparably more painful than that of a final banish-

ment, in which we should love each other as we now do."

* * * "We still indulge the hope of renewed intercourse; this hope may indeed be fallacious, but I cannot reject it. In the meantime, we do, and we will, continue to love each other; and this *is* consolation. Long before the dear circle was broken up, I looked forward to the time of separation with dread; chiefly from the apprehension lest that loveliest of plants, family affection, (which in spite of many storms, had been successfully reared and tenderly cherished among us) should droop, and in time wither, when the distracting cares of life should call off our attention from it. For my own part, I have scarcely yet made the trial; for, although the separation has taken place, yet, as my situation remains the same, I have found no difficulty in retaining and cultivating that affection which flourished when we were companions; and I am willing to believe that the scenes you have passed through since you left your home, have rather increased than lessened your attachment to it. It must be delightful, cheering, soothing, to turn from the chilling selfishness of those with whom you must often have to do, to the affection of your family and friends; to know that there are those who do, and who always will love you—whose happiness, in a great measure, depends upon yours, and who consider your interests to be the same as their own.

"From experience I know how baleful it is to the

disposition to be placed in circumstances in which the malevolent passions are liable to be roused, and in which we have to be concerned with those whom it is not only impossible to love, but whom it seems a sort of virtue to dislike. There is the same difference between love and hatred, as between happiness and misery; and there is more real enjoyment in the pains of the former, than in the qualifications of the latter. I envy those who can look with an eye of benevolent compassion upon the lowest instances of human depravity; who, discerning in their own hearts the seeds of the same hateful dispositions, feel more gratitude for the providential restraints to which they must attribute the difference, than anger towards those who have wanted these advantages."

The same strong feelings of affection appear in the following letters to her friend Miss S. L. Conder :—

COLCHESTER, *May 4th*, 1809.

* * * This letter was begun some time ago: many circumstances have prevented my finishing it; and I have been in a state of anxiety about the settlement of ———, which has so much occupied my thoughts, that I have not had the heart to resume my pen. His affairs are yet undecided, and we are waiting very anxiously to see what is the will of Providence concerning him. When I remember how kindly our heavenly Father has hitherto led us on as a family, in credit and comfort, through many struggles, I feel a

sweet consolation in committing all our temporal affairs to the same overruling Providence; and hope that my dear brothers, for whose welfare we feel unspeakable solicitude, may be guided by that "pillar of cloud and of fire," by which we have been so far directed. Yet again, when I see that many an one, equally deserving, and equally dear to parents and sisters, becomes a prey to misfortune, and encounters nothing in life but neglect and disappointment, then I say, how can I be sure that this may not be the case with my dear brothers? Dear Luck, you would pity me if you knew the many tears I have shed with these forebodings. The world is a chilling place, and going from the bosom of an affectionate family, they must feel it so: but all this is foolish and wrong; I do try cheerfully to commit them to God, and hope to be able to say with some submission, whatever be their fate, "Thy will be done." The separation which now draws so near, I hardly know how to fortify myself to bear, for though the distance is short, and our interviews may be frequent, yet I must view it as the breaking-up of our family, so long and so closely united; and a part of it so dear to us, leaving *home*—safe, happy, affectionate home, for ever. Excuse me, dear Luck, my heart is very full on this subject, and in writing to a friend, I could not avoid it.

Oh, when the mind is weary and heavily laden with these worldly cares, how refreshing is it to look beyond them all to that rest—to those happy, peaceful mansions

that are prepared for the people of God! The delightful hope of seeing all my dear family, and all I love below, safely landed there, makes these fears and anxieties fade into insignificance. But oh! what new fears and anxieties arise here! It may be well that our minds are not capable of measuring the vast disproportion between the concerns of this life and those of eternity, or we should not be able to give a sufficient degree of attention to our present duties. Could we view the most important events that can ever occur to us here, in the same light as we shall look back upon them from the other world, we should scarcely be able to exert a proper degree of energy in the pursuit or management of them.

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *November 1st*, 1809.

* * * Life appears to me to be wearing out so rapidly, and so large a portion of mine is already spent, that I more than ever regret these long intervals in my communications with my friends. But when I consider the few days which will be all, probably, that in the whole course of my life I shall actually enjoy of the society of those from whom distance divides me, I am obliged to take comfort in the animating hope of renewing in a happier world these delightful friendships, which will there flourish without interruption, and without end; and how refined and unalloyed will they

then be—no selfishness or vanity, no little jealousies to embitter their sweetness.

I regard it as one of the greatest blessings of my life, that all those whom my heart acknowledges as its owners, are travelling toward the same home; so that I can say with sincerity and peculiar emphasis, "These are the choicest friends I know." Our *earlier* friendships, though they must ever be remembered with interest and fond affection, were little adapted to promote our truest welfare. To them indeed we are indebted for many benefits of a less valuable nature; but I look to my present circle of friends with gratitude that has a nobler subject. If ever I reach that happy land where *their* possessions lie, I shall have cause for endless thanksgivings to Him who gave me such companions on my way. * * *

TO MISS SARAH WINTON.

September 26th, 1809.

* * * I have scarcely a greater pleasure than that of writing to my friends, especially as it is the only means of purchasing epistles; and I have frequently lamented that this agreeable employment is frequently rendered a toil to me, from want of leisure to devote to it. But I am so thoroughly convinced of the advantages of a regular employment, that some sacrifices, I am sure, ought cheerfully to be made to it. This, I am persuaded, will be understood by my Oxford

friends, and indeed, my dear cousin, I cannot but congratulate you upon the advantages you enjoy in your excellent family. Young people who possess a thirst for knowledge, and an eager desire for improvement, with industrious habits and activity of mind, and with the best opportunities for instruction, cannot be otherwise than cheerful and happy. Nothing can be more favourable to cheerfulness of temper than habits of industry and useful exertion; and a cheerful temper once acquired, so as to become habitual, is the greatest of blessings. Mirth and levity take wings and fly away at the first appearance of calamity or disappointment, but cheerfulness may be our companion in sorrow—will attend upon us in sickness—support us in poverty—enliven our old age, and smile upon the end of it; especially when all these pursuits, however important and interesting, are kept in due subordination to still more important duties. In vain should we cultivate our minds with useful knowledge, and polish them by ornamental accomplishments, if we forget or neglect the regulation of our tempers. This indeed is a task far more difficult than the acquirement of knowledge. It needs more constant watchfulness—more hourly exertion;—and indeed, with so many evil propensities to encounter, and so many enemies to resist, our most courageous exertions would certainly fail, had we on them alone to depend;—but we are not left unaided, if we are willing to seek Divine assistance; and we may humbly hope to subdue

a proud spirit, a fretful temper, or whatever be our prevailing temptation. * * * My employments scarcely allow me any time for reading. Fortunately it is an old established custom in our family for Mother to read aloud at breakfast and tea-time, by which means we get through a great deal. Nothing is more stimulating than the example of those who with advantages perhaps no greater than our own, have yet made such rare attainments. They show us what may be done by a proper application of time and talents, and it is particularly encouraging to find, as is very frequently the case, that proficiency is not the result of extraordinary genius, but the reward of industry and perseverance. * * *

The regrets occasioned by the separation of the family were soon afterwards diverted by literary interests. Poetry had formed the bond of union in that circle of friends in which Jane thought herself so happy to be included; and about this time a volume was projected, in which the talents of those to whom poetical composition was familiar should be conjoined. My sister was reluctantly persuaded to take her part in this volume: she expresses her feelings on the subject in a letter to the friend who edited the work. Alluding to some verses which she was solicited to surrender for publication, she says:—

"They were written to gratify my own feelings, and not for the 'Wreath' (such was then proposed as the

title of the volume); yet you have pressed them into the service; and what shall I say? I feel that, in permitting them to be published, I make some sacrifice;—as indeed all do who once begin to express their feelings in rhyme; for sentiments and feelings that, in plain prose, would only be whispered in secret to a chosen friend, in this form gain courage, and court the gaze, and bear the ridicule of the vulgar and unfeeling. Since I have had time to think soberly about the 'Wreath'—for this must always be its title—I have felt far less anxious about the share I am to have in it. Now I am not going to tease you with any of my 'morbid humility;' for I am as weary of it, and as angry with it as you are; but I must just tell you how it affects me. I think I know pretty well how to estimate my poetical talent; at least, I am perfectly persuaded I do not *underrate* it; and, in comparison with my blooming companions in this garland, I allow my pieces to rank as the leaves, which are, you know, always reckoned a necessary, and even pleasing part of a bouquet: and I may add, that I am not only contented, but pleased with this station; it is safe, and snug, and my chief anxiety is not to suffer anything ridiculous, or very lame, to appear: with these views I consent. The opinion of the little hallowed circle of my own private friends is more to me than the applauses of a world of strangers. To them my pieces are already known; by them their merits and their faults are already determined; and

if they continue to smile kindly upon my simple muse, she will not, I think, easily be put in ill-humour."

This volume was published under the title of "The Associate Minstrels." Some of Jane Taylor's contributions to it will be found in the second volume of this work; none of them were written with any thought of publication; but were the simple expressions of feeling on particular occasions. They exhibit the tender playfulness of her fancy, and the warmth of her heart; but the poetic vigour which she afterwards displayed had not then been roused. Yet she has since written nothing more characteristic of herself, or perhaps more beautiful, than the "Remonstrance to Time." In this piece especially, and in the "Birthday Retrospect," she has given the portrait of her own mind with such vivid truthfulness, that those who knew her seem to see and converse with her while perusing them. To portray itself, her mind needed only the mild excitement of her habitual feelings. But to display its force it required the stimulus of the strongest extraneous motives. The productions of her pen under these different impulses are widely dissimilar.

The volume was favourably received at the time, and it obtained for the authors expressions of approval from some whose commendations carried weight. The following letter furnishes some instances, prefaced by

what relates to the then unfixed position of the family at Colchester :—

MY DEAR MOTHER,

A parcel has at length arrived, and I sit down immediately, according to promise, to communicate its principal contents, though I tell you beforehand, that you may not be disappointed, there is no particular news on the subject which most interests us.

I shall now proceed to make extracts from the letters we have received. The parcel contained the sheet of hymns; and letters from Josiah, Isaac, Martin, Luck, Susette, Emma, Sarah Hinton, Professor SMYTH of Cambridge, WALTER SCOTT, and JAMES MONTGOMERY.

WALTER SCOTT says :—

"Mr. Walter Scott requests permission to intrude upon the 'Associate Minstrels' his grateful thanks for the pleasure he has received in perusing their beautiful poetry, and for the honour they have done him in the MS. verses. They have greatly overrated Mr. Scott's situation in life, which is not beyond a decent independence, and he might with still better grounds disclaim some of the compliments to his poetry, were he not too much flattered by the exaggeration, considering the quarters from which it comes. Should the 'Associate Minstrels' be at any time disposed to drop the Incognito, Mr. Walter Scott would be happy to claim

the honour of being made personally known to them, and meanwhile begs to assure them of his high respect for their poetical talents, and for the amiable qualities which their mode of employing them sufficiently indicates.

"EDINBURGH, *May 12th.*"

Thus far Walter Scott: now for our dear MONTGOMERY:—

"I believe I ought to acknowledge the honour which the 'Associate Minstrels' have done me by their graceful dedication in a gratulatory ode recounting their merits, and foretelling their future glories; but I am so entirely unaccustomed to write complimentary verses that I must in plain prose and in plain truth tell them, through you, that I sincerely and fervently thank them for the most pleasing and elegant token of unexpected and unbribed approbation, which I have yet received in public for the labours of my muse. Thank them therefore individually, and thank them collectively; their kindness is not the less estimable, because, except yourself, they are all unknown.

"In the volume of the 'Associate Minstrels' your 'Silence' is the promise of something so much greater than itself, that you must beware not to disappoint the expectation of your friends—shall I say of the world? You ought now never to write on mean or insipid subjects. I speak more confidently of your talents to your face, because I spoke highly—roman-

tically of them before I saw your face, or knew your name, &c. Of your companions I have only space to say little, and I am glad, because it will compel me to speak out, and to speak warmly. A. is in my mind the queen of the assembly. She is a poet of a high order; the first unquestionably among those who write for children, and not the last by hundreds of those who write for men. The 'Maniac's Song' has not only the melancholy madness, but the inspiration of poetry; also the simile, page 97, is wonderfully fine and perfectly original. The two stanzas that contain it are as lovely as the stars they celebrate.' J. (Jane) is very delicate and sprightly, there is a tender playfulness in her best manner that is truly fascinating. E. has a splendid imagination, and excels in description; her colouring is like that of nature, glowing and harmonious; but she must travel a little wider, and vary her scenery more, lest we should lose the benefit of those of her powers which she has not yet discovered in herself, for lack of an opportunity of exercising them. The lyre of S. does not disgrace the concert of the 'Associate Minstrels.' I hope J.'s reply will induce C. senior to take his harp from the willows, and tune it to the songs of Zion."

Thus far James Montgomery. And now, dear Mother, you have had the best of the juice. I have written in a wild hurry. We have no fresh news of

any sort, indeed this might content you. Your affectionate, JANE.

Up to this time Jane had written chiefly as an expression of spontaneous feeling; so soon as she was once convinced that the talent which she possessed might be rendered useful to others, she very rarely wrote as before, simply for her own gratification.

Soon after the publication of this volume, my sisters entered upon an undertaking of peculiar difficulty—that of composing a volume of Hymns for the use of children. The difficulty of the task will not be underrated by those who have had experience in the work of education, and who have allowed themselves to perceive the many perplexities which meet the teacher in the attempts to impart to a child anything beyond the most elementary religious notions. The utmost, perhaps, that can be done is to employ the most simple phraseology, and to use the plainest illustrations; to allow no obscurities of style to be added to the inherent difficulties of the subject, and thus to take possession of a child's memory, instead of attempting to appeal to its reasoning faculties. My sister Jane, in a letter of this date, says:—"I think I have some idea of what a child's hymn ought to be; and when I commenced the task, it was with the presumptuous determination that nothing should fall short of the standard I had formed in my mind. In order to do this, my method was to shut my eyes, and imagine

the presence of some pretty little mortal; and then endeavour to catch, as it were, the very language it would use on the subject before me. If in any instances I have succeeded, to this little imaginary being I should attribute my success. And I have failed so frequently, because so frequently I was compelled to say, 'Now you may go, my dear. I shall finish the hymn myself.'"

The authors, in their preface, justly say, "The 'Divine Songs' of Dr. Watts, so beautiful and so justly admired, almost discourage, by their excellence, a similar attempt; and lead the way, where it appears temerity to follow." The want, however, of a greater number of hymns of this kind, has always been felt by parents; and parents very generally have thought that the want is well supplied in this volume. It was soon after followed by a smaller collection of a similar kind, adapted to the use of Sunday schools. In this last, the attempt to simplify language has, perhaps, been carried as far as is at all desirable. If one might judge by the appearance of the manuscript copy of these hymns, its intricate interlineations and multiplied revisions, it would seem that many of them cost the authors more labour than any other of their writings. But a labour of this kind suited well Jane's habitual feelings, for it was at once undisturbed by any ambitious desire of literary distinction, and blessed with the hope of extensive usefulness.

CHAPTER IX.

REMOVAL TO ONGAR.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1810, Mr. Taylor resigned his ministerial charge at Colchester, and in the course of the following year, removed with his family to Ongar, having accepted the invitation of the dissenting congregation in that town to become their pastor. While it was still uncertain to what place her father might remove, Jane writes thus to a friend :—

"It is a strange sensation to survey the map of England without an idea as to what part of it we are to occupy. Yet, perhaps, we feel less anxiety about it than you may suppose. Not to be further removed from London than we now are, is our chief solicitude, and to be nearer would be very desirable; more especially on account of being able to see our dear brothers more frequently. For my own part, might I choose a situation, it should be a very retired one, among plain, good people, whom we could love—a village, not a town. My love of quiet and retirement daily increases, and I wish to cultivate this taste: it suits me, and does me good.

To part with our house here—the high woods and the springs, will cost me a struggle; and more especially my dear quiet attic. Might I hope to find such another in our next encampment, I should be less uneasy."

Allusions to the expected change of abode occur in other letters written during the same year, and the commencement of the next.

TO MISS S. L. CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *August 10th*, 1810.

* * * I should be rejoiced to think that the circumstances of our future lives would be more favourable than heretofore to the cultivation of our friendship. Present prospects, indeed, seem to render this improbable. Yet we know not how or where our lot may be ordered; and I do hope, however remotely we may eventually be situated, we shall never cease to cherish a lively affection for each other.

I regret that I have never answered your last truly kind and excellent letter. I little thought then that an interview would take place before I could reply. I wish that it were in my power to answer it in the way that would afford you the most pleasure. A cloud overshadows my mind: should it ever be dispelled, with what pleasure should I commune with you, and all my friends, on the subject that ought to be most interesting to us. I am ready to think that I should then be able

to conquer that reluctance which too often seals the lips even of sincere Christians, and rejoice in free, unreserved communication. Yet I dread falling into the unfelt technicality of religious conversation. But do not let me discourage you, my dear friend, from making this the principal subject of your letters. If I am at all more in earnest in the pursuit of the best things than in the days of my vanity, I may chiefly attribute the change, under the Divine blessing, to the example and precepts of my pious friends. I think I may venture to say, that I never receive one of their letters that does not make some desirable impression—transient, indeed, yet beneficial. In this number I am sure I may place your last, which has frequently been reperused in my hours of retirement with pleasure and advantage.

I am looking forward with the greatest pleasure to your promised visit. Nor will I allow, that even if it were to happen at the time of our expected family meeting, you would be thought an intruder. Indeed, I must say, that if ever we regarded any friends with that kind of confidence and affection which is current in one's own family, you and your sister may claim that distinction. Perhaps you may be the last visitor we may receive at Colchester. It does seem, at last, as if some important changes must take place in our family. Our dear brothers' leaving us was the first signal, though we did not then perceive it; from that hour we might have bid adieu to the many uninterrupted years of quiet

family happiness with which we have been indulged. Yet I am well persuaded it is all for our good. * * *

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *March 14th*, 1811.

MY DEAR LUCK,

Not to be behindhand in generosity, I take this whole sheet, although I have so recently despatched one. But I will not promise to fill it; or, if I do, it must be with mere *chat.* Yet, as I feel disposed to say a little more than a note ought to contain, I do not see why I should not follow the impulse. How melancholy would be our banishment from friends, if it were not for this delightful substitute for personal intercourse; it is, indeed, a privilege which, though so common, ought to be regarded with thankfulness. I often think, when enjoying it, of what I used to repeat when I was a good child—

> "Then thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
> Who taught me betimes to love *writing* and reading."

There are, indeed, many times when letter-writing appears a very slow and insufficient means of communication; I have felt it so often since you left us, when I have longed for such a kind of *tête-à-tête* as *tête alone* cannot enjoy. But whether or not I shall ever be indulged with more of your much-loved society than heretofore, I hope *this* channel of communication will never

be cut off. * * * It is in vain to wish that there were no alloy in the pleasures of friendship; yet I cannot help wishing that, however the weeds of the field may carry on hostilities, the lovely flowers of the garden would never raise a hostile thorn. But we know this world would be far too pleasant if we met with rebuffs and crosses only from foreigners: we can say with David, "If it had been mine enemy, I could have borne it." What smooth, pleasant afflictions we should have, if we chose them for ourselves! and what temples of idolatry would our hearts then become! God knows *where* to strike, and how severe soever the chastisement may seem, we are well assured that—

> "Crosses, from His Sovereign hand,
> Are blesssings in disguise."

TO MR. J. CONDER.

COLCHESTER, *April*, 1811.

* * * In the present unsettled and uncertain state of our family affairs, you may, perhaps, imagine that I am able to think and write of little else; but I am indeed surprised to find so little perturbation occasioned by them. There was a time when such events would have excited strong emotions of interest and anxiety, and when I could not have believed that I should ever contemplate such changes with composure; but now I have lived long enough to feel assured that life is life, every-

where, and that no material augmentation of happiness is to be expected from any external sources. Care, I know, will both follow and meet me, wherever I may go —even should I be transplanted from this cheerless desert into the bosom of my dearest friends. Friendship, far from its availing to shield us from the shafts of care, does but render us vulnerable in a thousand points. Yet, notwithstanding many anticipated troubles, there are times when I regard the possibility of a reunion with my dear brothers, and of joining the beloved circle from which we have hitherto been banished, with feelings of real delight. But our future destination is still so uncertain, that we have no distinct feeling, or very decided wish on the subject. When the idea of our leaving Colchester was first started, I desired nothing so much as a still more retired situation. I longed for the seclusion and tranquillity of an insulated village. A few months, however, have produced a great change in my views, if not in my wishes. Yet I believe it would be but too easy, even now, to persuade me to relinquish other projects, fraught as they are with anxiety and danger, to take refuge in some "holy shade," where I might welcome that "silence, peace, and quiet," for which I feel my heart and soul are made.

Though the harassing circumstances of the last year have driven poetry and its smiling train far from my thoughts, yet I am not forgetful of the kindness which prompted you to speak a word of cheer to a fainting

muse. I know I cannot better thank you for your excellent but long-neglected letter, than by saying it has fully answered the kind intention of the writer. What do you say, then, to my being quite convinced—shall I tell you that I am thoroughly satisfied with my talents and attainments, and feel an agreeable confidence in my own powers; and that, however injured by envious contemporaries, I am convinced that posterity will do me justice? Do not you believe it? Well, then, shall I tell a more probable story, and say, that in this respect, at least, I have learned to be content with such things as I have; and that I have in some degree subdued that unworthy ambition which exposes one to mortification and discontent? Fatiguing and sickening is the struggle of competition. I desire to withdraw from the lists. But if this be all, you may still think your friendly endeavours were unavailing. You did not, I am sure, expect that your letter would make any material alteration in my opinions and feelings; yet it was cheering and encouraging:—I assure you I felt it so, and therefore you will not think your pains unrewarded. As a source of harmless, perhaps even salutary, pleasure to myself, I would not totally despise or check the poetical talent, such as it is; but it would be difficult to convince me that the world would have been any loser had I never written verses (such, I mean, as were composed solely for my own pleasure). I do, however, set a much higher value on that poetical taste, or rather

feeling, so far as I have it, which is quite distinct from the capability of writing verse; and also what is generally understood when people say they are *very fond of poetry.* But while I desire ever to cherish the poetic taste, I own it appears to me to be as little my duty as my interest to cultivate the *talent* for poetry. With different sentiments I am compelled to regard my own share in what we have published for children. The possibility of their fulfilling, in any degree, the end desired, gives them importance, and renders future attempts of a similar kind a matter more of duty than of choice. I dare not admit all the encouraging considerations you have suggested, nor can I fully explain what I feel on this subject. That "such reflections are not of a nature to inspire vanity," is true indeed. No, I desire to be humbled by the thought; a consciousness of unworthiness makes it hard for me to indulge the hope of being rendered instrumental of the smallest good. * * *

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *June 28th,* 1811.

* * * What a pity it is that language should be so much abused, that what is really *meant* requires to be printed in italics! Of this the poet has most to complain. He *feels*, and perhaps his whole soul is filled, with a passage which ninety-nine of his hundred readers, at least, will peruse without emotion. This struck me in reading the first line of "Thalaba"—"How beautiful is

night,"—which may be read without the smallest impression. I read it so at first, but returning to it, and endeavouring to enter into the feeling with which it was written, I find it to be, "How *beautiful* is night!" and I discovered in these simple words all those inexpressible emotions with which I so often contemplate the dark blue depths, of which even Southey could say nothing more striking than this :—"How beautiful is night!" * * *

TO THE SAME.

COLCHESTER, *August 20th*, 1811.

Having a leisure evening — the last, probably, before our removal, I devote it to fulfilling my promise to write to you once more from Colchester. Yes, we are really going, and in a few days the place that so long has known us shall know us no more. Before I quit this scene of the varied interests of my childhood and youth, I ought to give my mind a long leave of absence, and send it back leisurely to revisit the past—to "recall the years in exile driven, and break their long captivity;" but in the hurry of the moment the feeling of it is lost; and even if I could afford to send my thoughts on this retrograde excursion, and "up the stream of time could turn my sail, to view the fairy haunts of long-lost hours," I ought not to ask you to accompany them, for they would stay to contemplate scenes and gaze on faces unknown and uninteresting to you. I can invite my

friends to sympathise in my present interests, and to survey with me my future prospects; but of *that* fairy land they could only discern a line of blue distance; while to me, "Here a cot, and there a spire, still glitter in the sun." But a melancholy and sentimental retrospection is an unprofitable indulgence—a kind of luxury which, perhaps, I have no right to allow to myself. Let me rather, if I have time for contemplation, take a more humbling and painful survey; and, reviewing the sins and follies of childhood and youth, resolutely say, "The time past of my life shall suffice to have wrought them." But I want energy to commence a new career. Whether my mind will recover vigour under new circumstances, or will faint under the exertion I have in prospect, remains to be seen: it is a fearful experiment.

Here I sit in my little room: it looks just as it always did; but in a few days all will be changed: and this consecrated attic will be occupied (how shall I tell it you!) by an *exciseman;* for his wife observed to me, when surveying the house—"Ah, this room will do nicely for my husband to keep his books in;"—well, I shall take with me all that has rendered it most interesting; and, as to the moonshine and the sunbeams that will continue to irradiate its walls, I would not withhold them from that son of traffic, although they will never kindle a spark of poetry in his eye.

* * * My good friend, be not too confident in your scholarship: you may be master of all the learned

languages, and yet a very dunce when you endeavour to decipher the hieroglyphics inscribed on a female heart. If you have a taste for puzzling studies, there are the Babylonish bricks for you, which have hitherto defied so much erudition :—but there would be a chance of success in attempting to decipher *them.* * * * * If I were qualified to offer the most judicious counsel on subjects where, in fact, I can but reason from distant analogies, I should still doubt whether, recalling the attention to a too interesting object, might not be productive of, at least, a counterbalancing evil. But indeed it is not my part to admonish you : were I to attempt it, I could adopt no better plan than that of making large quotations from your own letters, and then exhorting you to "mind what the gentleman says." If I feel a kind of confidence that your hope will not be blasted, it is by no means founded upon any outward appearances, which indeed at present afford no clue to conjecture ; but rather on that cheerful dependence on the Divine guidance, and humble submission to the Divine will, which characterise your feelings on this subject. That promise seems to justify such expectations. "Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Yet it may be dangerous to refer too often to such a ground of hope, lest our very submission should become interested." * * *

CHAPTER X.

RESIDENCE AT ONGAR.

THE wishes Jane had indulged were, for the most part, gratified in the removal to Ongar; especially as regarded the house, its accommodations, and its vicinity: and she once more enjoyed her room; which, though not an attic, was all she could desire. The Castle House, which my father occupied during the first three years of his residence at Ongar, was a most picturesque, old-fashioned abode, containing ample space for the pursuits of the family. It occupied a rising ground, just outside the ancient market town—and afforded that quiet seclusion which was so valued by its inmates. In the garden, perched on a lofty well-timbered tumulus, and surrounded by a deep moat, stood some remains of the old castle, from which the house derived its name.

Mr. Taylor occupied this pleasant abode for a period of three years. During this time, however, Jane was much from home. The winter was spent in London by the two sisters, and devoted to perfecting themselves in some of those lighter accomplishments which had

hitherto been more or less neglected in their education.

These frequent absences from home, increasing literary engagements, and other circumstances, induced my sister to relinquish her artistic pursuits, otherwise than as an occasional recreation: this change in her occupations was made without reluctance; though she always retained her fondness for drawing: and indulged it occasionally for the gratification of her friends: and she retained also, without any diminution, that vivid relish for the beauties of nature, which perhaps seldom exists in its highest degree, apart from some knowledge and practice of the imitative arts.

The first letter written after the removal of the family to Ongar, is addressed

TO MISS ELIZA FORBES.

ONGAR, *September 23rd*, 1811.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

This is the first time I have dated from our new habitation; having at length restored things to something like order, I sit down in my new room to address an old friend. At present, I scarcely know where I am, or who I am; but now that I find myself at the old favourite station—my writing desk, and suffering my thoughts and affections to flow in an accustomed channel, I begin to know myself again. And were it not for this, there are certain cares and troubles,

bearing my name and arms, which will never suffer me long to question my personal identity; it is, however, by a pleasure that I ascertain it this evening: I ought not, therefore, to begin by complaining.

But, my dear friend, you are looking forward towards a change so much more important than a merely local one, that it may well appear to you comparatively trifling. That which you are about to undergo is, of all changes, the greatest and the most interesting but one; and that one, if brought into comparison, makes even this appear insignificant. A recollection of the certain and speedy termination of every earthly connexion is, at such a season, likely rather to tranquillize than to depress the spirits:—it is calculated to allay anxiety, not to damp enjoyment. When marriage is regarded as forming a connexion for *life*, it appears, indeed, a tremendous experiment; but in truth it is only choosing a companion for a *short journey;* yet, with this difference, that if the fellow-travellers become greatly endeared to each other, they have the cheering hope of renewed intercourse and perpetual friendship at their journey's end. * * *

TO MISS MARIA HOLMAN.

* * * Having never yet been called to encounter trials so severe as those with which you have been exercised, I know I cannot fully enter into your

feelings; and indeed, in all cases it is so true that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," that in general, perhaps silent sympathy is the best kind of condolence. "To weep with those that weep," is, I believe, often an alleviation of grief; and the tenderest friendship can do little more than this. It is well that, at those times when the weakness and insufficiency of all human support are peculiarly manifest, such consolations are received from above, as enable mourners to rejoice in their losses, and to say, "It is well for me that I have been afflicted." If the sympathy of earthly friends is soothing and grateful to the wounded mind, how consolatory must it be to know and feel that, even in the midst of chastisement, "the Lord pitieth us as a father his children." You know Montgomery's "Joy of Grief," and have felt its touching sweetness, more perhaps than I can do. You have lost a friend—a brother; and you have, I doubt not, enjoyed the Sabbath of the mind which Christian resignation produces. In the common harassing trials and vexations of life, there is seldom any mixture of that joy which soothes and tranquillizes the mind under severer trials. But these painful bereavements which, when contemplated at a distance, appear perhaps too heavy to be borne, are rendered supportable by the strong consolations with which they are usually attended; and most frequently become occasions of thankfulness, on account of their salutary effects on the mind.

Prone as our earthly spirits are to cleave unto the dust, what should we be if all our worldly hopes were to be realized? Wise and kind is that system of discipline under which we are all placed; and when, at the close of life, we come to look back upon our mental history, we shall never be inclined to say of this affliction, or of that mortification—"It might have been spared." We shall then see that our prayers for spirituality of mind were answered by the removal of those worldly joys which produced a contrary disposition; and that when we desired that "our affections might be set on things above," our dearest friends were taken there: that so Heaven might become dearer, and earth less attractive. Such weaning events must tend, not only to reconcile our minds to the shortness of life, but to make us rejoice in it. We feel that "they are but light afflictions," because "they are but for a moment." * * *

A letter, which has no date, may here be introduced:—

"Prayer is to me so difficult a task, that when I have performed it with any degree of correctness, I rise from my knees, exhausted both in body and mind; every power is on the full stretch, and I have to labour and toil in order to gain but a glimpse of Him whose face I desire to see; and to realize His presence, and even His existence; and, if I relax for a moment this

painful exertion, then all is lost, and I seem to be addressing a shadow; indeed, I fear that I never did address a single petition, or direct a single thought to God. Do you know what I mean by saying that my prayers seem to fall short of the object to whom I would offer them?

"Nor can I describe the perplexity with which my mind is entangled whenever I attempt to direct a thought towards the Saviour; I feel as though I had no powers capable of viewing Him, or even of thinking of Him; and, though I am interested whenever I hear or read of His name, and feel encouraged and affected when I meet with the free and gracious promises and invitations of the Gospel, yet when I attempt to apply them, they seem to lose their value and importance. If I did but feel sin to be a burden, surely I should soon learn to fly to HIM, who alone could release me from it; but this is my misery, *I see not the evil of sin;* and though I know myself to be in cruel bondage to it, and a slave to Satan, instead of a child of God, yet I love my chains, for they do not gall me; and, with my eyes open, the word of God before me, and *knowing* everything, but *feeling* nothing, I am ready to say, I shall never have other views. It seems to me *impossible* that so great a change should take place in *me.* I am only surprised that I go on from day to day still seeking emancipation, and feeling uneasy in my present state, for I feel perpetually ready to give all up, and to draw back into perdition.

"Were anything less than the welfare of my immortal soul concerned, I should hesitate to trouble you so repeatedly, with the detail of my difficulties and fears; but here I hardly dare apologise—it is for my life—and I cannot refrain. Many months have passed since I first made you acquainted with the state of my mind, and though it is still enveloped with the thickest darkness, I have never ceased to rejoice that I did so. The knowledge that your disease—in some respects similar to my own—has been so completely cured, has awakened a hope which has encouraged me to persevere, when I believe I should otherwise have given over, and you have instructed me in the way." * * *

TO MR. JOSIAH CONDER.

ONGAR, *March 21st*, 1812.

* * * If you are indeed so happy as to be able to feel that "the attainment of your hope is worthy only of secondary anxiety," you need not fear making me melancholy by reminding me that "we must die to be happy:" it is a truth which, though at first admitted with reluctance, becomes more and more welcome as one after another eludes us; till at length it is received as the best and the only source of consolation. We ought, however, to distinguish between the language of Christian hope, and that of worldly despondency;—between the cheerful desire which rises towards "the

mansions that are preparing on high," and the gloomy contemplation of that solitude where "the weary lie at rest." But it is not merely under the complete failure of our schemes of happiness that this truth is impressed upon us; though the accomplishment of them may, at first sight, appear inconsistent with the grand condition of our pilgrimage—"in the world ye shall have tribulation": experience soon teaches us how easily our dearest delights become sources of trial;—"each pleasure has its poison too;" so that when the world has done its best for us, we are still mercifully compelled to acknowledge that, "we must die to be happy." May we both be supported by this hope in our conflict with the last enemy! * * *

About this time several of Jane's friends entered into the married state, and received her congratulations.

TO MISS SARAH LUCK CONDER.

ONGAR, *March 24th*, 1812.

MY VERY DEAR LUCK,

Though in much uncertainty whether this letter will reach you amidst the bustle of preparation, or after the grand event has taken place, I shall venture to dispatch it, hoping that, under whatever circumstances it may arrive, you will not deem it too great a trespass on your time to receive my kindest wishes and most

affectionate farewell. Though I have no apprehension of feeling any diminution of interest and regard towards my friend in a new character, yet I cannot but feel that I am taking leave of a name endeared by many a year of friendly intercourse; and while most sincerely rejoicing in a change which seems in every respect likely to promote your comfort and happiness, you will forgive me for mingling with my heartfelt congratulations, some tears of tender regret. There are no forms of expression —at least I cannot command any—which seem adequate to an occasion like the present. With everything to feel, there seems little to be said:—the best wishes are so comprehensive, that they occupy but a small space; and the strongest emotions are usually the least eloquent. You have, my dear Luck, my most earnest wishes and prayers for every blessing to attend you in your new and important situation; may you look back upon the transactions of the approaching day with increasing satisfaction and pleasure, every future year of your life!

We can now look back upon past trials with feelings of joy and gratitude:—how different is the colouring of the clouds of care while they are spread over us in dense and unbroken masses, and when they are rolling off far in the distance, and leaving but a dark streak on the horizon!" * * *

TO MRS. WITTY.

(Miss S. L. Conder.)

ONGAR, *May 1st*, 1812.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

In compliance with your kind wish, as well as to gratify my own inclinations, I take up the pen to address a line to you. Circumstances which I need not explain have obliged me to defer writing till it is nearly time to dispatch my letter, so that I am under the necessity of sending you an epistle very inadequate to the importance and interest of the occasion. At a future time, I shall hope to converse with you at leisure; now, I must offer my congratulations with nearly as much brevity as you conveyed your kind adieu; though not with less sincerity and affection.

In this sorrowful world the tones of joy and congratulation are so seldom heard, that one is almost startled by the sound; but they acquire additional sweetness from contrast:—it is truly refreshing to me to turn from various causes of pain and anxiety, to think of my dear Luck, and contemplate her fair prospects. For though I have lived too long in this changing world to imagine they will never be clouded; yet there is surely every reason to hope that, with the right views and moderated expectations with which you enter your

new career, as large a portion of temporal happiness will enliven it as can be desired by those who are looking forward towards a better inheritance. That the blessing of Heaven may rest upon you, my dear friend, in your new connexion, is my sincere and earnest prayer for you.

Every day convinces me, more and more, of the folly and uselessness of forming any defined wishes for earthly happiness, either for myself or others that are dear to me;—nothing will do but resigning all to the disposal of Him who not only knows, but *does* what is best for us. To Him I know you have committed all the events of your future life; and, in this cheerful dependence you must be safe and happy. * * *

TO MRS. GOLDING.

(Miss Eliza Forbes.)

ONGAR, *May 11th*, 1812.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

There was no part of your last kind letter more agreeable to me than that which expressed a wish for maintaining a more regular and frequent epistolary intercourse: on this the existence of our friendship must now, more than ever, depend: at least, without this kind of communication it cannot be either pleasant or profitable. You will give me credit for the sincerity of this

declaration; although my apparent inattention might awaken contrary suspicions; at least, in a more recent friendship. But you and I, dear Eliza, are too old and sober-minded to indulge in dreams of cruel neglects and faithless friendships; having, as I believe, entertained a sincere regard for each other for many years—a regard which, though formed in the doubtful ardour of youthful enthusiasm, has healthfully survived those short-lived transports—it is no longer romantic to indulge the hope that the mutual affection will be as permanent as it is sincere. I am not indeed insensible to the disadvantageous consequences of an almost total suspension of personal intercourse; and the still more unpropitious effects of an entire dissimilarity of interests and of occupations: still I am inclined to believe that there is a peculiar interest attached to the connexions formed in childhood, or early youth, which is not easily lost; and that those who are inseparably united with the history of our *fairy years* may insure a place in the lively and affectionate recollections, even of declining age. I have wandered so far from my unfinished apology, that I think you will not wish me to retrace my steps in search of it; I will, therefore, only add my sincere wish and intention to atone for past remissness by future regularity.

Letter-writing is much more of a task to me than it used to be: often, when I should enjoy a *tête-à-tête*, to converse on paper with a friend is almost burden-

some. I know not whether it is that I am growing old, or stupid, or lazy; though I rather suspect, all three. Seriously, however, I am certainly experiencing some of the disadvantages of increasing years. With the follies of youth, a portion of its vigour too is fled; and being deficient in constitutional or moral energy to supply its place, my mind is hanging as limp as a dead leaf. But perhaps, dear Eliza, you will scarcely thank me for talking of the effects of *years*, in which respect I am so little beforehand with you. I do not, however, ascribe all to the depredations of time; many a gay lady of five-and-forty retains more of youth than I do; and in you, though not a gay lady, will long, I hope, appear a young and lovely wife. So I will take this opportunity to turn to a more pleasing subject, and tell you how much I rejoice to hear from yourself how agreeably you are realizing the fair prospects which have so lately opened upon you; and from *others*, with what peace and propriety you occupy the new and important station upon which you have entered: may you long enjoy and adorn it, my dear friend! Earthly happiness (comfort I should rather say, for I believe the former exists only in the Dictionary) is indeed to be prized when it does not interfere with higher pursuits; and still more so when it tends to assist and stimulate them.

The ease and leisure afforded by such a lot as yours, is, in this view, highly desirable: it presents the most

favourable opportunities for usefulness to others; and to yourself, for growing in meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Happy are you, dear Eliza, that it is your highest ambition thus to improve them. While some are driven through life as over a stormy sea—incessantly tossed and thwarted by the restless billows, till they arrive, faint and weary, at the haven of rest, others are permitted to ramble at leisure through a pleasant vale, till they gradually ascend to the everlasting hills: and of how little consequence is it by which course we are led, so long as our wanderings do but terminate in the same blissful country. We all receive the kind of discipline which our peculiar dispositions require; and if it is severe, we may be sure it is necessary too. * * *

CHAPTER XI.

FIRST AND SECOND VISIT TO DEVONSHIRE.

My sister's taste for the beauties of nature was gratified about this time, by a residence of some months in the most romantic part of Devonshire. The occasion of this visit must be mentioned, as it determined the course of her life for several succeeding years.

The brother, to whose part it has fallen to prepare this Memoir, had lately spent some months in the west of England, for the recovery of his health, and had returned to London greatly benefited; but on the approach of the following winter, being again advised to seek a milder climate, it was determined that his two sisters should accompany him to Devonshire.

Having just before roamed over a great part of that delightful county, and become familiar with its beauties, it was to him a pleasure of the liveliest kind, to introduce his sisters to these novel scenes. With young persons whose taste for the beauties of nature is very strong, and who have been accustomed only to the uniform surface and the simple rural amenities of the

eastern counties, a first sight of the scenery of the west of England excites the most vivid delight. Jane felt these pleasures to the full; and even after a second and a lengthened residence at Ilfracombe had rendered her familiar with its scenery, the pleasure with which she rambled daily among its rocks was undiminished.

During the whole of the first winter passed at Ilfracombe, the change in my sister's mode of life was almost as great as it could be; for instead of that assiduous occupation of her time to which she had always been accustomed, the mornings, whenever the weather permitted, were spent in social or solitary rambles, and the evenings, most often, in agreeable society—and some highly agreeable society was indeed to be found at Ilfracombe. Except in maintaining correspondence with her friends, I do not know that she wrote anything during this winter; the time, however, was not lost, for she not only improved in health, but she gained greater breadth of mind and wealth of imagination, and acquired those more free habits of thought which are scarcely compatible with unremitted application.

Yet she was impatient of this long-continued inaction. "I have found," she says, "that any great external interest, for a continuance, will not agree with my mind; it is living upon dainties, instead of plain food. Accustomed to expect my evening's entertainment from myself, in some kind of mental exertion, a complete relaxation from this, and depending wholly,

for many months, on external means of gratification, is a kind of indulgence which will not do to live upon; my mind never had so long a holiday, and I feel it is time to send it home."

Referring in a letter of a later date to the same period, she writes—

"As to my employments during the winter, it is very true that I have been disappointed in my expectations of writing: but I have not neglected any favourable opportunity, for none has presented itself. I went to Ilfracombe, expecting to find there complete retirement and much leisure. You know how mistaken we were in this calculation. The engagement of the evenings with our welcome visitors, completely deprived me of the only time I can ever profitably devote to writing. I am far, however, from thinking this a lost winter, or that I have enjoyed a too expensive pleasure: for I would not but have known and seen what I have at Ilfracombe, for twice the expense of time and money. I do, however, look forward, with much satisfaction, to the prospect of resuming my former habits after this long relaxation; and, whenever I take up the pen again, I hope to reap the advantage of the past winter."

The swell of the sea is not indeed so great at Ilfracombe as it is on the north-western coast of Cornwall; but when the pent-up tides of the British Channel

meet a hurricane from the Atlantic, and the contention falls upon the sharp and towering precipices of this coast, the beauty and terror of a sea-storm can hardly be better displayed. Not at all intimidated by rain or wind, Jane would seldom stay within, when the breaking of the sea over the house in which we lodged, announced the coming storm.

The neighbourhood of Ilfracombe has also, in several spots, the charm of rural and sequestered beauty. The deep ravines which commence upon the elevated moors and run down to the sea-side, are, some of them, thickly wooded, or they were so fifty years ago, and are studded with stone-built, ivy-covered cottages; and though not on the largest scale, these glens present in their way the most perfect combinations of picturesque objects. Scenery of this kind is much less dependent upon the decorations of summer than the wooded slopes of a merely rural country; for *there* it is alone the clustered evergreens that hide the desolation of the season; but *here* the permanent forms are equally beautiful with those that are transient: and indeed, many of these spots produce a more congruous effect upon the mind in the gloom of a December afternoon, than under the splendours of July.

The Poem entitled "Philip," opens with a descriptive passage which will at once be recognised by any reader who has traversed the coast of North Devon. The peculiar scenery of Lea filled Jane's imagination: it

was her favourite walk; and having heard the melancholy story of a secluded being who, with his maniac daughter, had long inhabited one of its few dwellings, she fixed upon it as the scene of a history which floated in her mind for three or four years, but of which only a portion was ever committed to paper.

The following letter to her friend, Mr. Josiah Conder, may here find a place :—

ILFRACOMBE, *November 14th*, 1812.

* * * Though you may consider this as a tardy performance of my promise, it is, I assure you, but the second letter I have dated from hence. I perceive that it is all in vain to run to the remotest corner of the earth for retirement and leisure; at least, it is in vain to seek for them amid the rocks of Ilfracombe. * * * I wish I could introduce you for a moment (or as much longer as you could stay) to our comfortable fireside, around which we often talk of those we have left, till we forget the distance which separates us. * * * I promise not to detain you long with descriptions of the scenery around us, to which it would probably be more toil than pleasure to listen. For in such cases, where the imagination of the writer can fly, that of the reader must climb; and perhaps she is wholly indisposed to the exertion. Besides that, it is not the most agreeable thing to be told that "you can form no idea—you can't imagine—you never saw

anything like it," &c. So then, to do the thing more politely, I must tell you that *I* had formed no idea of the kind of scenery with which we are surrounded; and that I had never before seen anything like it, was evident from the effect it at first produced upon me.

Ilfracombe is situated in a deep valley, surrounded on one side by barren hills, and on the other by stupendous rocks which skirt the sea. Our lodgings very pleasantly overlook the harbour, which affords us constant entertainment. The sea is close behind the house, and is so near a neighbour, that, during the last high tides, the waves rose in immense sheets of foam, and fell over a high wall opposite our chamber windows: it also flowed into the house in front, and kept us close prisoners. Our walks in every direction are so interesting, that, while the weather permitted, we spent a great part of the day abroad. Our rambles among the rocks I enjoy most; though at first they excited sensations of awe and terror, rather than of pleasure. But now we climb without fear amid a wilderness of rocks, where nothing else can be seen, and nothing heard, but the roar of the distant sea; here the only path is over the huge fragments which lie scattered in all directions, and which it requires some courage as well as dexterity to scale. Besides these, we have several cheerful walks, commanding the sea, bounded to the north by a beautiful line of Welsh mountains. Their aspects are very various; at times appearing only

like faint clouds in the horizon; but when the weather is clear, and the sun shines upon them, they exhibit an exquisite variety of light and shade, and delicate colouring, finished by distance, like the finest miniature. From some of the highest hills we have distinctly perceived the buildings on the nearer part of the coast; —to the west the wide ocean is before us,—

> "Now sparkling with sunbeams, now dimpled with oars,
> Now dark with the fresh-blowing gale."

The rocky cliffs of Lundy Island add beauty and interest to the scene. * * *

ILFRACOMBE, *February 24th*, 1813.

MY DEAR FATHER, MOTHER, AND CO.

The appointed interval of silence being nearly expired, I undertake to despatch another sheet, though with no news to communicate, but as no news is good news, you cannot complain. We have had lately some very mild spring weather, and often think how pretty the Ongar garden is looking with snowdrops, just as it did this time last year when we returned from our London expedition. Here we do not see much to denote the change of seasons, as the barren hills and rocks owe little to these variations. * * * About a week ago, we had some rough weather, and a great deal of thunder and lightning; the first storm there has been since October. The sea was very fine—I

only wish I could tell you how fine. We were called out of bed one morning by the Fortescues to go and see it. The same day we went out among the rocks, and took shelter from an approaching storm in a fine but tremendous cavern. The sea was then rolling like the loudest thunder, the clouds hanging heavily over it, and we expected lightning as well as rain. Nothing could be finer, if we had not been frightened. At last we set off in hopes of escaping the storm. Our way home was over perilous fragments of rock among which we had to scamper at full speed; I got a heavy fall and sprained my arm. The rain came on in torrents, and we were all soaked through. A few days before an Irish packet put into Ilfracombe for a day or so, on its way from Bristol to Cork. One of the passengers was a young lady, the daughter of a dissenting minister of Cork, who took lodgings close to us, and we and the Gunns became acquainted with her; we felt for her, as she was greatly afraid of the water. When the packet set sail we went to see her off, with many good wishes for a prosperous voyage. All the passengers seemed very merry as they sailed out of the harbour; and we were shocked to hear a day or two afterwards that during the storm which blew last night, three of the people were washed overboard and lost. We hear so many affecting things of this kind here, that we shall feel much more than ever on a stormy night.

We have been very busy lately in helping Mr. Gunn to form a Book Society here. He is soliciting everybody for presents for it. We promised to ask Father if he had anything to bestow, thinking he might very well spare a copy of "Lowell's Sermons": — if he is willing, let it be sent, with anything else he does not care for. Your affectionate

JANE.

A name here occurs which may deserve a brief notice: it is that of a gifted man whose influence over my sister's mind was more than transient. Mr. Daniel Gunn, a Scotch minister, had charge, at the time of our sojourn at Ilfracombe, of a small dissenting congregation in the town. He was from the extreme north—Wick, in Caithness:—a highlander of the finest type, and in style and appearance, or seen on horseback, would no doubt have been thought military rather than clerical in his training and associations. Heading a company of Highlanders in a charge, he would have seemed to be more in his place than when expounding Scripture to fifty poor folks in a meeting-house. In private (and he was a very frequent guest at our lodgings) there was a charm in Mr. Gunn's manner, and a life in his conversation which made him the centre and the sovereign of every company. Keen—wary—reticent as a Scotchman, he was nevertheless an enthusiast in his way—and, must it not be added?

a fanatic too. The influence he had with young persons—the children of Sunday Schools, was magical; and the Sunday School was his chosen sphere. Surrounded by children and young persons—whether scores of such at Ilfracombe, or hundreds afterwards at Christchurch—his look—the glance of his eye—was law to the crowd: who could resist that fiery eye? And yet it was a fire shot forth from a loving nature:—a loving nature, and yet its demonstrations were such as to need much charitable interpretation in frequent instances. Mr. Gunn had brought with him from Scotland a hatred of prelacy, and of Establishments, and of liturgical worship, which was intense to the last degree—it was a fanaticism, and almost an insanity. This deep passion nevertheless so ruled itself within him that, on the exterior, all was bland, courteous, gentlemanlike. He soon found or felt that *we*, his new friends, although at that time good dissenters enough, after the tame English fashion, were very far from being alive to the *infinite importance* of the principles of Dissent;—ours was a milk-and-water nonconformity:—we could speak of bishops, and not burn as we spoke; or we might even on occasion enter a Church! Our wary friend did not assail this indifference with vehemence. He felt his way. His influence over us was great, and he used it with caution. The result of this influence in the two years of our intercourse, was—with my sisters, to invigorate their non-

conformity; and with Jane it was enough to give point to some passages in "Essays in Rhyme" which otherwise would have been wanting in so much animation.

Happily, friendships were soon after formed with pious persons, members of the Established Church, which availed to moderate and modify this eager polemic feeling. I believe that Mr. Gunn in his later years at Christchurch was eminently useful, and always much respected.

Early in the spring of the year 1813, we prepared to leave Ilfracombe: in the expectation of doing so, my sister says—

"In a week or two we expect to take our leave of Ilfracombe. Thus ends another short chapter of the little history of life. Like many others its contents have not corresponded with the title,—it has disappointed our fears, and greatly exceeded our expectations of enjoyment: may it end with a hymn of praise!"

The most romantic part of the Devonshire coast is about eighteen miles east of Ilfracombe: this spot we determined to visit on our way home. The excursion is described by Jane in a letter written from Linton to her father and mother:—

"Here we are at this celebrated part of North Devon. We arrived yesterday, about four o'clock, and I think you will pity us when I tell you that, from an hour after we left Ilfracombe to the present moment, it has rained incessantly. We calculated upon arriving

in time for a ramble before evening, and hoped to spend the whole of this day in exploring the beauties of the place; instead of all this, we have been obliged to content ourselves with sitting before a blazing fire—turning over Warner's 'Walk in the Western Counties,' the 'Miseries of Human Life,' and an odd volume of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' Nor is this all; for I awoke yesterday at Ilfracombe with every symptom of a bad cold, which is now at its height; so that I have no hope of going out, even if the weather had cleared up—this is pleasure! Ann and Isaac have twice ventured out in the course of the day, and have taken a hasty view of the Valley of Rocks, and of the village of Linmouth; and I have had the satisfaction of hearing a description of what I am within half a mile of, and came on purpose to see. However, not to make the worst of our story, I must add that when we arrived within two miles of Linton, a scene of grandeur and beauty opened upon us, which alone would repay us for coming. We had travelled several miles over a high, wild, and dreary tract of country; giving the idea of travelling over the world as a planet, and rendered still more desolate in appearance by torrents of rain. We were obliged to continue in the carriage, ascending hills, where travellers almost always alight to relieve the horses, and were even constrained to do the same in passing a frightful precipice, where there is neither fence nor hedge, and where a chaise very lately

fell over. At this point, a fine mountain scene opened upon us; and a sudden turn of the road discovered the enchanting vale and village of Linmouth, close to the sea, and at the base of rocks of tremendous height, and most exquisitely diversified in their colouring. After a long and steep ascent, we reached the Inn, where, fortunately, the room we occupy overlooks a considerable part of this fine prospect. This Inn stands near the edge of the precipice that overhangs the sea, and seems to be in the clouds. To-morrow morning we are to meet a chaise from Minehead, at the top of the opposite hill—the ascent being so steep that chaises rarely come across the valley."

The letter is continued from Axminster :—

"On Thursday morning, finding my cold surprisingly better, and the weather being finer, I resolved at least to see the Valley of Rocks: so, at half-past five, we set off at full speed, and I was gratified with a hasty sight of it. The place gives the idea of gigantic architectural ruins; and the impression left upon my mind by the novelty and silent solemnity of this magnificent scene, will not soon be effaced. We returned to breakfast at the Inn, and directly afterwards set off to climb the opposite hill, attended by a horse with panniers, carrying our baggage. This walk afforded us an opportunity of seeing something of the beauties of the vale of Linmouth, which I will not attempt to describe. At the summit of the hill we found our chaise; and at the

end of the day reached Taunton, where we stayed a day, and the next, set out for Axminster, and found the kindest welcome from our dear friends."

With these kind friends, and with others in the south of Devon and Dorsetshire, some weeks were very agreeably passed by my sisters, before their return to their father's house, where they spent the next summer.

During her stay at Ongar, Jane took an active part, I believe for the first time, in a Sunday-school, then lately established at some distance from the town; but of her labours in the Sunday-school I shall again have occasion to speak.

On the approach of the autumn, it once more seemed desirable to return to Devonshire; and Jane's sisterly affection was now tried, not only by the call to banish herself from a kind and comfortable home, but by the necessity of leaving behind her the companion of her former excursion; for her sister was now preparing to leave her father's roof for one of her own. Jane expresses her poignant feelings at this separation from the constant companion of her life, in a letter which was addressed to Mr. Josiah Conder, some time after her return to Devonshire:—

ILFRACOMBE, *February 17th*, 1814.

Although many months have now elapsed since we parted in the Barnstaple coach, and although in all that time you have received nothing from me but a

postscript, I cannot plead any of the engagements with which you accuse me,—of the whole list, there is not more than one that I can plead guilty even of thinking about. Yet your conjecture that I have been "wondrous busy," is perfectly correct. You well know how one week after another slides away, in every day of which we intend to write to our friend "to-morrow;" and when to-morrow comes, even if some pressing occupation does not fill it, it finds us so dull and flat, that we resolve to devote the evening to some "outer court" correspondent, for whom the only requisite materials are pen, ink, and paper. Thus it was with me during the months of November and December. Of January I can give a better account; for one fatal morning, early in that month, Miss March and I set off for Barnstaple. I said, "Good-bye, I shall return on Saturday;" but it was exactly a month before I saw Ilfracombe again; being imprisoned by the snow all that time. I wished to have written to you from thence, but even friendship is not warm enough to keep ink and fingers from freezing during a sharp frost, except by the fireside, and that agreeable trio—fire, friendship, and solitude, did not meet me there. I have been back only for a fortnight, the last week of which has been occupied in entertaining Mr. Gardner, who has been our guest. He left us this afternoon, and this evening I am at your service, having clearly proved it to be the first in the last five months in which I could write to you.

Much has occurred in our little circle since we last met;—so much, that if you were to ask me now, I could scarcely get through the whole. The recollection of all that has taken place sometimes makes me melancholy, and sometimes it makes me glad; but oftener it makes me neither the one nor the other. But this indifference, or rather sameness of feeling, under the important changes of life, always makes me melancholy when I think about it.

After walking so far through the vale of tears, inseparable companions, Ann and Jane are at last divided a few short interviews is all, perhaps, we shall ever more see of each other on this side the grave. We are both still in the vale of tears, and shall continue to weep and to smile as heretofore; but not together: our way will still be chequered by cloud and sunshine; but it may often be stormy weather with one, while the other is enjoying a clear sky. But tears will not always flow; the heartrending feelings once over, the common temperature of happiness returns. It is but occasionally that I have leisure to ruminate upon our separation, and then it is difficult fully to realize it. It is very true that we cannot always be as miserable as we wish—cheerfulness steals upon us insensibly, and we are surprised to find ourselves tolerably happy again, in spite of our heroic resolutions to the contrary. You will think these reflections unsuitable to the occasion, and perhaps say that I am too inexperienced in suffering to offer remarks

upon the subject: of this, however, I must be allowed to be the best judge; though I have hitherto been mercifully preserved from the severer and more sudden strokes of the rod, I am not unacquainted with sorrow; and it is in consequence of what has passed in my own mind that I am sceptical as to the existence of such a thing as incurable grief, though it is often talked of. * * *

The following letter recites the incidents of our return to Ilfracombe.

ILFRACOMBE, *October 2nd*, 1813.

MY DEAR FAMILY,

Without preface I must tell you that we arrived here in safety, and that we experienced no kind of inconvenience from the journey. * * * We accomplished all we had to do in good time, and after a refreshment in Bucklersbury, set off with S— and J—, who sat in the coach with us a quarter of an hour till it drove off. * * * At the White Horse Cellars we took up passengers, one of whom was a large woman with a sick baby, and a bundle as large as both. We were greatly discomfited at this; but by variety of eloquence, I succeeded in persuading her to remove into the other compartment at the next stage, which she quietly occupied for the rest of the journey. This was a great relief, and on we went very comfortably; it was

a fine night, and the morning broke beautifully over Salisbury Plain. We got to Taunton at eight, had a good supper, and went to bed; but owing to the fatigue, I fell into such a profound sleep, that in the morning the porter, after rattling at the door several minutes, went and told Isaac that he could not "wake the lady." Isaac, much alarmed, gave orders for the door to be broken open; but previously calling through the crack, I answered, and when he found I was not dead, he spoke rather smartly. This was merely the effect of unusual fatigue, as I am now very wakeful. It was rather singular that the next town I came to I saw this chalked upon a wall — "She is not dead, but sleepeth!" It was scarcely light when we left Taunton, but by the time we got to Bishop's Hull the day had dawned, and we saw Mr. Gunn's pretty cottage all shut up, and the curtains drawn above stairs. The cruel coach flew by, and I went on feeling much more than I usually do at 5 o'clock in the morning! * * * As we got to Barnstaple before five, and as the evening was very promising, we determined to go on immediately. * * * As the evening began to close in over those dreary hills, it seemed as though we were taking leave of the world, and we could not help pitying ourselves—two lonely travellers, at such a distance from our home and friends. The evening was very dull, and the greatest part of the way it was more than twilight. In order to keep up our spirits, we talked of the cheerfulness of

Ilfracombe, and the comforts of our home there. About eight o'clock we entered the town; the light of the blacksmith's shop showed us the Meeting as we drove by. When we arrived at Mrs. Blackmore's we were pleased to hear *Peggy* called for; the rooms are all nicely done up, and everything clean and comfortable. * * *

Monday Morning.

By riding outside a few miles, I took a cold, which, though not violent, confined me indoors all Saturday; which I greatly lamented as it was very fine, and Isaac took the first walks alone. I have now scarcely any remains of it, but as yesterday was Sunday, and this is a rainy morning, I have not yet even been on to the Lanthorn Rock. * * * Peggy is just as usual, and always coughs (as before) when she opens the door. * * *

ILFRACOMBE, *November* 31*st*, 1813.

MY DEAR FAMILY,

Perhaps the appointed time for writing is scarcely arrived; but at this important period, we feel very impatient for home news, and for a few weeks to come we must not grudge postage, and I hope you will not grudge time to satisfy our solicitude. The pleasure with which I used to look at the Castle House is much abated since mother's letter. We long, of course, to know how it is likely to go. If you are to be moved, perhaps it will be a more healthful or perhaps a less expensive situation. I hope at least you will not have

to turn out before Michaelmas. * * * Thank you, dear Jemima, for your interesting journal, the beginning of which we hope to receive. We are very glad that you have had so much pleasure, and hope it will do you good in every sense. We went yesterday morning at ten o'clock with Miss March, to see a hunt, and climbed the highest hills beyond the church, called the Great Mollicot;—about these we scampered in pursuit of the sport for three hours, following the hunt through hill and dale, and a fine sight it was amongst that noble scenery. At last we actually joined the party, being introduced by Mrs. Hill's brother; and among horses, and huntsmen, and the whole pack of dogs, we pressed on to see the poor hare started. We saw her crouching down in a hedge, and in a moment dart out and scamper over the hills, with the whole party in full pursuit. Returning from this exploit we were not in the least fatigued, and could have set out again with pleasure. * * * Everybody tells me I am looking much better than when I came, and that I am growing fat. You would have been surprised if you could have looked in upon us a few days ago, and seen two little girls at our table. Three Irish packets, full of passengers, were windbound here, and we heard that on board of one were two little children, with nobody to take care of them but an old soldier. We therefore sent for them to spend a day with us, and found they were officers' children going to their parents at Kilkenny, in Ireland.

Upon further inquiry we found they had just come from Colchester, where they had been two years and a half at boarding-school with Miss Balls on Easthill! They were pretty little creatures of seven and eight. The old corporal had been all the way to Colchester for them, and they were very fond of him. We had them again on Sunday, on which day they sailed, and we saw them off. We gave them our hymns, and some tracts. After many disappointments Miss —— arrived last Tuesday. I waited on her next morning. Her first appearance rather disappointed me. She is far from the delicate beauty one might expect a sister of ——'s to be. She is, however, altogether a fine girl. She sent her compliments to me on Sunday morning, and said Mr. Hunt was going to preach, and she would be glad if I would go to church with her. Poor Peggy hesitated and looked quite frightened when she delivered the message. Of course I begged to be excused. Miss —— says he certainly does preach the Gospel, and from what we hear, I believe he is trying to do so. He abstains from all gay company and cards, and seems quite the divine. * * * Our hours, of which Ann inquires, are professedly the same as before, only that we really aim to breakfast at eight, and should generally do so if Peggy were punctual; and we really sup at nine when we are alone, and retire very regularly when the clock strikes ten; so that when you are just sitting down to supper, we are going to bed. * * *

In the beginning of October, Jane and her brother were once more comfortably settled at Ilfracombe; and though the social attractions of the place were now less than they had been on our first visit, it still contained kind friends; and the advantage of more leisure and seclusion was now enjoyed and improved by my sister, who presently resumed her literary pursuits with eagerness.

At the close of this year, Jane addressed a letter to her sister on the occasion of her marriage to the Rev. Joseph Gilbert—then one of the tutors of the Theological College at Rotherham. From this letter the following passages are extracted:—

ILFRACOMBE, *December 18th*, 1813.

MY DEAR ANN,

I cannot suffer this interesting morning to pass without something of a salutation from Ilfracombe; and I dare say this letter will arrive in good company; but I am sure no one will address you who can feel on this occasion either so glad or so sorry as I do. So far as you only are concerned, I think I am entirely glad, and feel as perfectly satisfied and happy as one can do about untried circumstances. But I cannot forget that this morning, which forms one indissoluble partnership, dissolves another, which we had almost considered so. From the early days of "Moll and Bett," down to these

last times, we have been more inseparable companions than sisters usually are, and our pursuits and interests have been the same. My thoughts of late have often wandered back to those distant years, and passed over the varied scenes which chequered our childhood and youth :—there is scarcely a recollection, in all that long period, in which we are not mutually concerned, and equally interested. If this separation had taken place ten years ago, we might, by this time, have been in some degree estranged from each other; but having passed so large and important a portion of life in such intimate union, I think we may confidently say it never will be so. For brothers and sisters to separate is the common lot ;—for their affection and interest to remain unabated is not common, but I am sure it is possible, and I think the experience we have already had, proves that we may expect its continuance. Farewell, my dear Ann! and in this emphatical farewell, I would comprehend all the wishes, the prayers, the love, the joy, and the sorrow, which it would be so difficult to express in more words. If there is a dash of bitterness in the grief with which I bid you farewell, it is only from the recollection that I have not been to you the sister that I might have been. My feelings have been so strongly excited to-day, that I cannot bear more of it; and I must leave you to imagine what more I would say on this occasion.

I cannot — no, I cannot realize the busy scene at

the Castle House, nor fancy you in your bridal appearance. I intend to place myself before the view of the house, about the time I imagine you will be walking down the gravel-walk, and stand there while you are at church, and till I think you are coming back again. How strange—how sad, that I cannot be with you! What a world is this, that its brightest pleasures are, almost invariably, attended with the keenest heart-rendings.

My mother's feelings in parting with her daughter, though she had every reason to rejoice on the occasion, were very strongly excited: with the hope of administering comfort, Jane addressed to her a letter, of which the following is a part:—

"I hope that, even so soon as this, Time has performed his kind office, and taken off the edge of your sorrow. If I did not know that he can perform wonders, even in a few days, I could not venture to say so. I was grieved indeed, but not much surprised to hear that you felt the parting so acutely; and when reading your description of it, almost congratulated myself that I was so far off. Now, however, I would gladly come, and be your comforter if I could. My dear father and mother, we have felt much for you—believe that you have the love and the prayers of your absent children. I seldom close my eyes without thinking of you, and hoping you are comfortable. I feel the separation more this time than I did before, though in all other respects I enjoy

as much comfort as I can expect to do in this world. I am rejoiced to know that you have had the solace of dear S.'s tenderness; and in this respect, you have indeed been gainers by my absence; she has, I know, done all that human sympathy can do, to console and soothe you.

"I walked here (to Barnstaple) last Wednesday with Miss March, without any fatigue, though it is ten miles of incessant up-and-down hill. The deepest snow remembered in Devonshire set in the day after I came, and has so blocked up the roads, that I am detained a close prisoner. I intended to have returned on Monday, but they are so unused to snow here, that no one will venture to go, though I should not be afraid. I cannot tell, therefore, how long I may be detained. Though I am very comfortable at Mr. Gardiner's, I am now impatient to return home, as I left my brother only for a day or two."

The snow continued to render the road between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe nearly impassable for more than a month. Jane's solicitude on her brother's account induced her to hazard the journey the first day on which it was pronounced to be practicable; and she returned to Ilfracombe on horseback, some time before any carriage could pass the road.

Without obtruding what relates to myself, in this Memoir, I could not fully display the self-denying, indefatigable, and tender assiduity with which Jane

devoted herself to her brother's comfort;—to promote his restoration to health was, indeed, the business of her life, during several years. The reader of her memoir must not forget this principal feature of Jane's character —her generous devotedness to the welfare of those she loved, though the exemplification of it may appear in these pages less prominently than it might.

The marriage of her sister Ann, and the consequent separation of the sisters, hitherto such constant companions, may properly afford opportunity for a brief notice of the highly estimable and accomplished man who thus came in to divide the sisters. The Rev. Joseph Gilbert, at the time now spoken of, was Classical Tutor at the Rotherham Independent College—Dr. Williams being the Theological Tutor and Principal. Mr. Gilbert had himself received his College training in that College, where his attainments—classical and mathematical, and his powers of thought—had brought him into a conspicuous position among his fellows, and especially had won for him the regard of Dr. Williams, himself a man of very eminent ability, and favourably known by his theological and metaphysical writings. The trustees of the College, listening to the advice of the Principal, to the wishes of the students, and to a prevailing opinion of Mr. Gilbert's ability, invited him to take the position in the College which he retained, together with the charge of a congregation at Sheffield, for several years, and until his removal to Hull.

It had been by the perusal of several much talked-of articles in the recently established *Eclectic Review*, of which Ann .Taylor was reported to be the author, that Mr. Gilbert was induced to seek an introduction to her. The first interview took place at Ilfracombe, during the first winter of our sojourn there. The marriage took place in the following winter, while Jane and her brother were a second time making it their home.

Mr. Gilbert, after some years' ministrations at Hull, removed to Nottingham, taking charge of the Friar's Lane congregation. It was there that he died in 1852. A man of the warmest benevolence, of extraordinary intelligence, extensive acquirements, excellent judgment in common affairs, and withal of deep and elevated piety. His wife, the "Ann" of the "Original Poems" and "Hymns," passed peacefully away on the 20th of December, 1866, surrounded by her sons, her daughters, and her grandchildren.

The seclusion and leisure of this second winter at Ilfracombe were employed by my sister in writing the earlier portions of the tale entitled "Display." She commenced it with a definite idea of the characters she designed to portray; but without any specific plan for the development of the story. She followed, every day, the suggestion of the moment; and this was, perhaps, the only way in which she could ever have written. It was her custom, in a solitary ramble among the rocks, for half an hour after breakfast, to seek that pitch

of excitement without which she never took up the pen. This fever of thought was usually exhausted in two or three hours of writing, after which she enjoyed a social walk, and seldom attempted a second effort in the day; for she had now adopted the salutary plan of writing in the morning only. To this plan she adhered ever after with only occasional exceptions.

A letter to Mrs. Golding exhibits the tranquil happiness she enjoyed at Ilfracombe.

"*April 23rd*, 1814.

* * * I doubt not that your natural vivacity and vigour of mind will enable you to retain, much longer than I shall, some of the sweetest feelings of youth. Those which are connected with its follies we wish not to retain; but there is a delicious glow of feeling which already, I am conscious, has lost much of its warmth. At this beautiful reviving season, I am reminded of *that spring* which is for ever passed away. But I would not have this letter tinged with the melancholy such reflections are apt to bring with them, especially as it is very far from my usual state of feeling. I am as happy now as I can expect ever to be in this troublous world; and could I feel a little more security of the continuance of my present circumstances, I should not have a wish with respect to external things. But this would be too much like a rest to be good for me. Even the recollection of the spring of life being gone by, occasions

melancholy, only because our views are so much confined to this infancy of our existence; to cultivate an intimacy with the circumstances relating to its future stages is truly the only wisdom; for this alone can reconcile us to the decaying conditions of mortality. I can easily believe that those who have but lately entered into the important relations of life, feel rather as if it were but just begun, than approaching its termination; but I, who am sailing down the stream of time without any such interruption, am more conscious of progression, and have more leisure to look back upon the past, and to expect the future. But I had intended quite another strain; perhaps the scene before me has made me thus sentimental. The tide is just filling the pretty harbour, and the evening sun shines mellowly on the rich rocky banks opposite, and on the venerable hill which fronts the port. I enjoy, though not as I once should have enjoyed, this fine spring, in this charming place.

CHAPTER XII.

RESIDENCE AT MARAZION—PUBLICATION OF "DISPLAY," AND "ESSAYS IN RHYME"—CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "YOUTHS' MAGAZINE."

My sister's literary engagements were suspended during the following summer by our departure from Ilfracombe. Having determined to spend the next winter in Cornwall, we held ourselves ready to take the first opportunity that should offer of going thither by sea. It was on a fine evening in June that we left Ilfracombe in a small fishing vessel, intending to pass round the Land's End to Mount's Bay; but Jane suffered so much from sickness that, in the evening of the next day, we landed at St. Ives; and after spending a few days there, proceeded to Marazion, where we had already engaged lodgings.

St. Ives, *June 11th*, 1814.

My dear Father, Mother, etc.

I am thankful to say we landed here safe last night, and as the letter informing you of our intended departure from Ilfracombe was not put in the post till yesterday, I am in hopes the letters will arrive nearly

together, so that you will have little or no suspense. We set sail from Ilfracombe at nine o'clock, on Thursday evening. A mild pleasant breeze wafted us out of the harbour, and some friends stood waving their handkerchiefs to us on the Lanthorn Rock. We sat upon deck till it was nearly dark, and then were obliged to go into the cabin, in which there was something like a bed for me and a *shelf* for Isaac. We were tolerably comfortable till about two in the morning, when a fresh breeze sprung up, and almost directly I called out, "Oh! I'm sick!" and the answer was, "So am I." From that till the moment we landed we continued so with very short intervals, and those were not free from miserable qualmishness—never did I suffer so much. I could not rise from my bed all the day, though I much wished to see the coast as we passed. We set off, intending to go round to Marazion, but gladly accepted the proposal of the Master to put into St. Ives, for it seemed as though another night of it would have killed me. The sailors were extremely kind and tender, and paid us every attention they could. I was sick to the very moment of being carried into the boat which brought us on shore, and when we came to the Inn, I could only lie all my length on the floor till bed-time. Isaac was not nearly so much troubled, which I was very glad of, and I doubt not we shall both soon feel the good effects of the voyage, which is reckoned extremely beneficial. The night before we set sail, I felt my

courage failing, and could sleep but little with the thought of the voyage; but the next day my spirits were much better, and kind Barney said everything he could think of to encourage me; and from the moment we set sail, it was so calm and pleasant that I felt no fear, and afterwards, when the gale was fresher, I was too ill to think of danger. * * * We landed at nine o'clock. This morning we only feel weak and queer; you may see my hand trembles a little. It is about seven miles across the land to Marazion, but we felt it would be much the most comfortable plan to rest awhile before proceeding; so we have been looking out for lodgings, and have hired comfortable rooms which we shall enter this evening. If we should feel ourselves comfortable, we may, perhaps, stay a week or a fortnight, but this is quite uncertain at present. * * * The sea view here is very pretty; but the place not at all so. * * * I thought of you entering the new house, and much long to hear particulars. * * * I hope the fatigue has not been too much for you. All day Thursday we were as busy packing as you could be.

Post going off this minute, so I can say no more.

Farewell, your affectionate

JANE.

The "kind Barney" here referred to might claim a few lines in this Memoir. How often, in our winter's walk at noon upon the pier, have we stopped for five

or ten minutes chatting with poor Barney, and asking his opinion of wind and weather, in relation to which he was well skilled. Seldom did his prediction fail of fulfilment, when, looking ominously at the sky, he said, "There's dirt above!" Rain followed, as a matter of course.

This Barney was a sailor; he was still young; a man of robust make, regular features, and a fine, free, seafaring look; always cheery, though a little pensive. From exposure to wet and cold on an Arctic voyage, he had become entirely paralysed in his lower limbs, and was wholly dependent in all his movements upon the help of others.

Weather rough or smooth, he was daily lifted out of his little cabin, at the foot of the Lanthorn Rock, and seated in a sort of crib on wheels, and was thus brought upon the pier, where he could change his position a little, by applying his powerful hands to the wheels of his carriage. I believe he had some sort of pension, but he was pensioner for all his little comforts and cooking upon the faithful love of a young woman, to whom he had been engaged before the occurrence of this calamity; and who continued through a course of years, I believe, to devote herself to her lover, doing whatever she might well do for him, and especially cooking his frugal dinner with great care, so as to tempt his delicate appetite, for he used to say, "If there's the least thing unpleasant to look at, I can't touch a morsel."

The letters following should here find a place:—

July 5th, 1814.

MY DEAR DEAR FAMILY,

* * * I wish you could just look in, and see me as I am now sitting,—in a beautiful study, with my window open upon the bay; vessels passing before me, and the sea breezes wafting the delicious coolness. The offer of Mrs. Grenfell's house, which I mentioned in my last, we accepted—all difficulties being removed—and took possession last Monday; and we find it so cool, so airy, and so extremely pleasant, that we esteem it quite a providence for us; for I do think it likely to be essentially beneficial to Isaac, during the heat of summer, besides the change of scene, and cheerfulness, which produce a real effect. The house stands close at the bottom of the hill which rises behind the town, so that I walk straight out of my bed-room, which is at the top of the house, through a trap-door into the first garden. From this, a flight of steps takes us to the second, and another long flight to the third, which is the garden in which we have always had the liberty to walk. My bed-room has a fine sea-view, and I see the vessels passing as I lie in bed. Isaac's is very large and airy, with a view likewise. Our only difficulty is, to know where to sit—we have such a choice. There is the dining-room, and the drawing-room, and the sitting-room, and this charming study, besides our own rooms, &c.

* * * I suppose mother had not time to copy out any part of the "Panorama Review?" If anybody can do me this charity by the parcel, I shall be greatly obliged. I am much more anxious to see blame than praise, and the thought that you may keep back anything of *that* kind, would fidget and discourage me beyond measure. Perhaps you are not aware *how much*. I am out of the way here of hearing what is said, and though you tell me that it is "highly popular," I should like to know who says so, and how you know it. Is the Second Edition out? * * *

Your affectionate JANE.

MARAZION, *November 25th*, 1814.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

We removed to our lodgings the last week in October. Mrs. Thomas exerted herself much, to prevent our feeling the change. Several new things were bought, and everything made as comfortable as possible. We have quite won Ann's heart [the servant], so she is delighted to come and bring us a pat of her butter, or one of her Cornish cakes. * * * It will, as it is, be quite as much as I shall do, to get out my book by the spring. Sometimes I write pretty fast, but often sit whole mornings without a word. I reckon that I have done just half of it. * * * We had a most interesting sight just before we left the Grenfells', which I

venture to say you will never have at Ongar,—an *Indiaman* wrecked upon the rocks almost under our windows. I woke early one morning with the violence of the storm, and going to the windows to look at the sea, beheld the torn sails streaming in the wind over the tops of the houses. We hastened down to the shore, and there was indeed a scene! The rocks and sands lined with hundreds of people, or *wreckers*, as they are called, ready to seize all that floated on shore; the boats going out at the hazard of the lives of the men, to save the passengers, who narrowly escaped. It was a rich cargo, and the sands have been covered with coffee ever since. * * * One trick of trade, which I have found very useful myself, I daresay you are up to—that is, in discussing any fault in a character, to have the *real* fault of a real character in my eye; which prevents the advice from being too general, and is more likely to make it come home to the conscience and feelings. This, I think, I can do without *uncharitableness;* it is only studying Nature, and without it I could do *nothing*. If you are at a loss for a character, take *mine*, and you will find faults enough to last out the whole volume. I assure you that I take greater liberties with *myself*, in that way, than with any of my friends or neighbours; and have really found so far, the beam in my own eye makes me see more clearly to take the mote out of others'. The moment that I leave off looking at some original, I find I am

writing what is tame and unnatural, or *general* and unimpressive. Pray do not think I am *dictating*, or that it is in consequence of dissatisfaction with your writings; it is only because it struck me, and I should be thankful for any hints in return.

Yours affectionately,

JANE.

If she had not found agreeable society at Marazion, and formed there some friendships which she highly valued, my sister would have continued to regret the rocks and solitudes of North Devon; its gloomy and romantic scenery suited peculiarly her tastes, and the temper of her mind, which were little pleased by the business and bustle, and open bareness of Cornwall. Yet the aspect of Mount's Bay is agreeable; and Penzance is as pleasantly situated as almost any town in the kingdom. The country in its immediate neighbourhood is more wooded than other parts of the county, and the Bay, the villages on its margin, the Mount with its Castle, and the distant rocky hills, form a most complete and pleasing picture.

At Marazion we staid long enough to form a strong local attachment; our mode of life was suited to our tastes; Jane's occupations filled her thoughts, and were relieved by frequent intercourse with three or four persons, whom she was happy to call her friends.

Speaking of her feelings at this time, she says,—

"The ease, tranquillity, and comfort of my present lot, so perfectly congenial to my temper and feelings, demand my constant thankfulness. It is no business of mine to inquire how long it will last. Long, I know, it will not last; and this I feel so sensibly, that my anxiety for myself, and my dear family, lessens as it respects our prosperity in this world, and increases for better things,—that it may be well for us all in the next."

And again, in a letter to her mother,—

"Notwithstanding the toil of writing, it has its pleasures; and often, both this winter and last, when I have sat down at ten o'clock, all alone in our snug parlour, with a cheerful fire, and with nothing to interrupt me for four hours, I have really felt very happy. As to my writing 'under disadvantageous circumstances,' it is so far from being the case, that I am sure I can never expect to be more favoured. All domestic cares, except just giving orders and settling my accounts, are completely taken off my hands by Mrs. Thomas. The afternoon suffices for the needlework I have to do; and we are little interrupted by visitors; besides the rare privilege of having a room and fire quite to myself during the morning. I therefore cannot plead my present circumstances in excuse, either for the poverty or slowness of my writing; for I do actually what you describe as so desirable—'sit down composed and unembarrassed in my study.' Indeed, I cannot be sufficiently thankful for the large share of comfort I

have enjoyed the last three years: with nothing to try my temper, and exempt from most of those unpleasant realities which you mention as inseparable from the charge of a household. But I do not wish to fly from family cares; and one of the satisfactions of returning to you for a time would be that I might share them with you."

From the friendships above alluded to, and from intercourse of a more general kind enjoyed at Marazion, Jane Taylor derived new and important advantages. For, hitherto, her connexions had been almost exclusively within the pale of one religious community; but her Marazion friends were, most of them, members of the Established Church, and moreover, were very jealously attached to its constitution and its forms. She had also full opportunity of observing the state and spirit of another religious body—the Wesleyan Methodists, who, in the western part of Cornwall, are the predominant sect. She ever looked back upon the expansion of her views and feelings which took place at this time, with great satisfaction. Yet her attachment to the principles in which she had been educated did not become less firm: perhaps it was made more decided by the comparison she had now the means of forming between different practices and opinions.

As there was at Marazion no society of Congregational dissenters, Jane attended the service of the Established Church, and that also of the Wesleyan Methodists; and she gave her assistance, regularly, at

the Sunday School connected with the former:—making only this exception—that she should not be required to teach the Church Catechism. The concession was amicably yielded; and in this school she continued to labour with great pleasure, during the two years of her residence at Marazion. Her exertions on the Sunday were, however, so much beyond her strength, that they evidently impaired her general health. But Jane, far from yielding to any plea on this ground, adhered resolutely to the triumph of doing "what she could," and continued her labours in the Sunday School during ten years of declining health; and indeed, till the very last time of her attending public worship, a few weeks before her death.

Among the friendships formed in Cornwall, there were two or three that have a claim to be noticed. The first name I shall mention is that of JOSIAH HILL, whose name is already familiar to the readers of John Foster's "Life and Correspondence," for to him many of Foster's letters were addressed; and these letters were of a kind that indicates—or as we may say—*connotes* the intellectual qualities of the party addressed. I have just now said that the Rev. Daniel Gunn might easily have been mistaken for an officer in a Highland regiment! This—our new friend—might have been taken for almost anything rather than for what he was—a Wesleyan Preacher! I intend no disrespect to the order in saying so: but, in truth, whether

one encountered him in the street, or saw and listened to him in "Chapel," or conversed with him in private, there was a feeling as if Josiah Hill, the Wesleyan minister, had somehow missed his place, and had come, socially and ecclesiastically, into a false position. His Christian convictions had led him to devote himself to the Ministry of the Gospel:—his scruples on some points had forbidden his taking orders in the Established Church (he was independent of stipend), although his tastes and feelings were of that kind which would have made the social position of a clergyman altogether congenial and homogeneous. How then a Wesleyan minister? Some very emphatic feelings or beliefs in regard to Calvinist doctrine had availed to alienate him from the Evangelical Dissenters—Independents and Baptists, and thus it was that the door of Wesleyan Methodism, and no other, stood open to him.

The readers of John Foster's Correspondence will need no aid in forming a notion of Josiah Hill:—meditative, pensive, with a range of thought fitting him to maintain intercourse through many years, with such a one as the author of the "Essays." The friendship commenced about the year 1812; and was maintained until severed by death, the one surviving the other only a few weeks. Foster thus speaks of his friend in a letter written twenty years after the commencement of the intimacy. "A man of very great and rare excellence: pious, benevolent, intelligent, and of liberal

spirit and sentiments, with large knowledge and experience of mankind."

At the time when we were resident at Marazion, Mr. Hill was a preacher on the Penzance Circuit; and in his turn, according to the "Plan"—which we took care to inspect—preached in the Marazion chapel. He made acquaintance with us, although we were hearers only, and not "in Society;" and after two or three calls it became a frequent incident, most agreeable to ourselves—that he hung the bridle of his horse upon the hook of our shutter, where, to the annoyance of passengers it stood, blocking the narrow street for two, three, or four hours; and until in fact the "preacher's" thoughtlessness as to his poor beast drew upon him some severe animadversions. In truth, conversation did not often flag; and it was late in the day perhaps, when an unusually energetic kick or stamping of the exhausted and patience-tried animal, awakened his rider to a recollection of times and seasons, and he abruptly left us.

These conversations were, in subjects and in tone, a contrast to those of Mr. Gunn at Ilfracombe: and they had, no doubt, much influence in enlarging my sister's habitudes of thought. The Dissenterism which had lately been instilled by our Highland friend, was much softened; *intellectual* Christian feeling, with an admixture of pensiveness, coming in the place of the sectarian zest; and this mellowing mood was

recommended also by literary tastes, and much general information. When in the course of things Josiah Hill left the Circuit, we were much in the mood to which Foster gives utterance, on a like occasion, when Mr. Hill removed from Bristol. Writing to his friend from Stapleton, November, 1822, he says—"Even your vanity will hardly be competent to imagine how much I have felt the loss of your near neighbourhood. Going into Bristol, or the thought of doing it (I mean for an hour or a day, not for residence), is now quite a different thing, and I do it much less frequently. With all due regard for my friends there (and they are very worthy ones), I must confess that the *special* point of attraction is gone; and the grievance is, that there is no hope of its being there again. My maledictions have not been slight; nor seldom repeated, upon that Methodist system of yours, which will let nothing stay in a place that one would most wish to keep there. My good wife most cordially says Amen, to these imprecations—till we recollect that this is doubtless a part of the system tending very powerfully, on the whole, to its utility." * * *

A young lady must take the next place in these notices of my sister's Marazion friends. This was Miss Anne Maxwell—the lady to whom is addressed a poem entitled, "The Shipwrecked Lascar—a True Tale." The incident out of which this Lascar story took its rise, is mentioned in the foregoing letter to her father

and mother. Miss Maxwell was the daughter of a Lincolnshire gentleman; but on account of the extreme delicacy of her health, and perhaps for other reasons, resided at Marazion with a maiden aunt. The circumstances of this young lady's early life, which might not have been of the most favourable kind, had taken effect upon a peculiar temperament in which were combined extraordinary fixedness of temper, with a self-denying kindliness, such as would have fitted her well for the labours and sacrifices of a "Sister of Charity." In truth, her manner and appearance were very much those of a nun. She might have sat to a painter as his model for a St. Agnes. Hitherto Jane had become acquainted with no sample of this order of character. This new friend—a lady by habits and connexions—but destitute of that cultured intelligence and literary proficiency which she had been used to look for as a matter of course in her more intimate friends—nevertheless, commanded respect, and engaged affection on account of virtues of which no instance had before come in her way. Wanting in that liberty of thought which attends intellectuality, Anne Maxwell exhibited upon occasion a courage and a romantic determination which Jane Taylor would not easily have imitated. So it was on the occasion referred to in the Poem above-mentioned. The Indiaman wrecked in Mount's Bay was a "country-built ship"—and was manned by Hindoos, Lascars, and Mahometans. These men were for a time lodged

in a building near the town, and it had become our amusement to visit the place, and to watch their various modes of caring for themselves. At length they were put on board a vessel London-bound—one of them excepted, who was in too feeble a state to be moved from his pallet. Of this invalid Anne Maxwell took charge, and during several weeks, or months, was his nurse, and found for him whatever he needed.

A few years later than this time, Miss Maxwell became the wife of a clergyman, the Rev. Henry Lyte, a volume of whose miscellaneous poetry still has its admirers. Husband and wife have been some years deceased.

Another friend—if, indeed, my sister would have ventured to speak of her as her "friend"—was one, her acquaintance with whom had a marked influence in opening her mind, inasmuch as she witnessed an order of Christian excellence very unlike any that had occurred within the circle of her earlier friendships. In a letter above cited, Jane mentions the kind offer of a spacious house at Marazion for some months, which we gladly accepted. The offer was made by Mrs. Grenfell, whose daughter, Lydia, has become known to readers of the "Memoirs of Henry Martyn" as the object of an attachment of which his letters contain such affecting evidence. Soon after our arrival at Marazion, my sister had become acquainted with Miss Grenfell, and had rendered aid in the Sunday School under this lady's management. The time now spoken of was about two

years after the death of Henry Martyn, which occurred at Tocat, October 16, 1812, and little more than one year after that event had become known to her to whose earthly happiness it was fatal.

The notices of this lady which occur in the "Memoir of Henry Martyn" are very brief; but his letters to her from India and Persia give evidence of those high qualities which in his view fitted her to be his companion in that course of arduous service upon which he was entering. His biographer says: "Here it is due to the full illustration of his Christian character to mention, that it was not merely the ties of family or friendship which bound him to Cornwall; others there were of a tenderer, if not stronger kind; for he had conceived a deeply-fixed attachment for one of whom less ought not, and more cannot be said, than that she was worthy of him: an attachment which—whether he thought, as he afterwards did, that it should be encouraged, or, as he now did, that it ought to be repressed—equally exhibits him as a man of God, whose affections were set upon things above, and not on things on the earth."

Henry Martyn thus speaks of his parting with the woman of his heart: "Our ride home (with several Christian friends) was delightful, our hearts being all devotedly disposed; mine only was unhappy. Parted with L—— (Lydia Grenfell) for ever in this life, with a sort of uncertain pain which I knew would increase to greater violence." "These forebodings," says his biogra-

pher, "were but too soon realized. On the evening of the same day, and for many succeeding days, his mental agony was extreme." In his Journal there are expressions of this anguish: "How miserable did life appear, without the hope of Lydia. Oh! how has the discussion of this subject opened all my wounds afresh. I have not felt such heartrending pain since I parted with her in Cornwall. . . . . My heart was sometimes ready to break with agony, at being torn from its dearest idol; and at other times I was visited by a few moments of sublime and enraptured joy."

None who saw and conversed with Miss Grenfell, as my sister did, unknowing of the love through which she had so recently passed, could have surmised the fact, or could have supposed what had been the peculiarity of the trial she had endured. Perfectly calm in deportment, and cheerful when engaged in labours of Christian charity, she betrayed no inward conflicts: yet, must there not have been such! The "study" in the attic story of the house which Jane mentions, and whence she enjoyed the prospect of the Bay and the Mount, had no doubt been the scene of conflicts such as none but the strong in soul are liable to, or, suffering them, may survive. A dignity like that of high birth, softened by unaffected Christian humility and meekness, was her characteristic. Yet was it evident that she held at a distance any who were not entitled to her intimate regard. My sister's intimacy with Lydia Grenfell was not

of *that* kind. I do not know that any correspondence between them took place after we left Cornwall.

Thus far my part has been to record friendships which death has severed; it remains to mention the name of one who survives, and to whom several letters among the later dated are addressed. These letters exhibit more affection than is usual in a friendship of so recent a date.

Nearly opposite our lodgings at Marazion resided the Rev. Melville Horne, with his family; which consisted of his wife, her aged mother, and a daughter, Marianne. Mr. Horne was minister of the Episcopal Chapel already mentioned, and where we usually attended. He had become known in the evangelic and missionary movements of the time, and had gone out to Western Africa as a missionary. At this time the period of his public services was drawing to a close. He soon afterwards took a curacy in Yorkshire, and finally at Salford; and thence, under the care of a devoted daughter, removed to Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

Of this daughter, Jane's young friend, I shall say nothing more than this—that the intercourse was very frequent, almost daily, and that notwithstanding the disparity of years, a friendship took its rise which was maintained till my sister's death. Miss Horne's affectionate warmth and vivacity, in contrast with the icy sweetness of Anne Maxwell, and the lofty meekness of Lydia Grenfell, took effect as a sort of amalgam, giving

to our Marazion circle an animation that engaged my sister's feelings, which otherwise might have received a chill from the much less fervent style of the other two.

These three ladies, evangelic in their principles, firm and decisive in their attachment to the Established Church, and very devout in their observance of its ritual, made their way into Jane's affectionate regard on grounds wholly unlike those which had determined nearly all her earlier friendships. These excellent persons were not enthusiasts in literature and poetry; their tastes, line of reading, and conversation were such as a few years earlier would have stood in the way of intimacy. Jane Taylor at twenty might not have recognised the excellence which at thirty commanded her esteem; in these new friends she acknowledged a superiority of which hitherto she had thought little—as she had seen little—that of Christian devotedness, apart from intellectuality and its tastes and accomplishments.

These new impressions of evangelic piety produced an effect upon my sister's own feelings and impressions, if not decisively on her inherited opinions, which greatly modified her style of thought as a writer; and, in fact, the product of this change of feeling and of this enlargement of her religious sympathies may be very distinctly traced in many of her papers, among the "Contributions of Q. Q." Those, at least, who had known Jane Taylor at the time of her sojourn in Devonshire, would easily see that the three years' sojourn in Cornwall

had had a great effect in giving depth and breadth to her Christian consciousness, and thus had qualified her the better to teach and to train the young, who have been and are her readers.

Moreover, it was during these three years that my sister came into contact with Wesleyan Methodism. A way into Methodism, if I may so speak, was opened for us by our intellectual friend Josiah Hill, whose large and free modes of thinking, and habits of speaking, allowed him to converse with us on subjects touching the merits of the Society in a manner in which perhaps his brethren on the Penzance circuit would not quite have approved. When, therefore, we attended at the Wesleyan chapel, what we saw and listened to was—Methodism *interpreted.* Then, on the other hand, we came to know something of the Christian worthiness of some persons of humble rank who were leaders or prominent persons in the Society. Moreover, two or three useful men among the preachers came within our circle. It was in this new circle that my sister learned to look with charity upon the prejudices—may we say the innocent prejudices of Christian people. Among the books we had brought with us was, as matter of course, a "Watts's Psalms and Hymns." It chanced that in some way which I forget, we came to know that this book was an object of aversion, almost terror, to the good people with whom we lodged, who were well-instructed Wesleyans; it was that "Calvinist book" which they had been taught to hold in abhorrence. This very

same book Jane speaks of in a letter, as in use in the Episcopal chapel, and the use of which in the service, she says—"made the prayers go down." Thus, while we were stretching our candour towards Wesleyan prejudices against "Watts's Hymns," we ourselves were only breaking away from the thraldom of Dissenting prejudices against the Liturgy! Yet these narrow feelings did at length give way, albeit my sister continued to the last to think herself a Dissenter.

Soon after our removal to Marazion, my sister resumed writing the Tale she had commenced at Ilfracombe; and late in the same year it was sent to press, under the title of "Display." The favour with which this work was received, and more especially the high praise bestowed upon it by a few individuals whose judgment and sincerity could not be questioned, produced a very desirable effect upon her mind; for it gave her, in some degree, that confidence in her own powers which she so much needed. Hitherto, she had persisted in attributing almost the whole success of the works in which she had had part to her sister, but *this* was all her own; and she was constrained to believe that she could write well, and that too in a higher line than she had before attempted; for "Display" was admired on account of excellencies of a more substantial kind than such as attach merely to an entertaining or pathetic fiction. The advice which had been long and often urged upon her of undertaking to write for mature readers, was now

greatly corroborated. Yet, perhaps, had she attempted a fiction upon a more extended scale, she might have found herself to be moving out of her proper sphere. For the beauties of her style accord best with a brief, inartificial, and condensed narrative. Breadth of design, amplification, and digression, seemed not to be within her range—her simple story is merely a thread, supporting a series of just sentiments and sparkling graces. That knowledge of the human heart which is evinced in "Display," might deserve to be called intimate; but it is exhibited in touches so delicate, that they might escape the eye of the reader whose eye was less quick and piercing than that of the author. But probably it has been these fine and half-hidden beauties that have procured for this tale the praise (not often won by mere fictions) of being read again and again, with ever fresh pleasure.

The volume did not, however, escape without some strong animadversions—chiefly on the ground of the opinions expressed in it. In reply to some observations on one point, the author says:—

"As to the dancing, I certainly did not think I had erred on the strict side; and I think I have observed the distinction you mention, of not objecting to dancing *in itself*. The children at Stokely, you may remember, were all dancing very merrily one evening. But, in fact, except with mere children, there is no such thing as 'select Christian dances.' Go where you will, it is the

worldly who dance; and the serious do not. E—— is an instance of what is said about Emily; her newly acquired religion is so far from having made her dull or precise, that there are many whom I have seen shake their heads at her youthful sprightliness. Yet since she has been a Christian, she says she does not wish to dance, especially as it could not be without associating with those who think only about this world. As to what Mr. Leddenhurst says about 'dancing through the world,' it is a remark I have heard made by those who are very far from being puritanical in their manners, or narrow in their views; and I merely understand by it, that a person of a contemplative and serious turn of mind, impressed with the grand realities of religion, and intent upon remedying, as far as possible, the sin and misery of the world, will not be much disposed to go 'dancing through it.'"

The suggestions of her friends were so far admitted as to induce Jane to look wider abroad than hitherto, for the topics of her next undertaking. But to express her opinions on grave subjects, in naked prose, was more than she could dare. In verse, she felt as if sheltered. She therefore determined to write what she thought and felt, with less reserve than hitherto; but under the cover of poetry. Such were the views with which, soon after the publication of Display, she began writing her "Essays in Rhyme." With an exception presently to be mentioned, the composition of this

volume occupied her time during the remainder of her stay at Marazion.

Throughout the winters of the years 1814-15, my sister read much more than she had ever before done in the same length of time. The works she selected were of the kind best adapted to invigorate the understanding;—her taste in reading was for history, which always excited in her mind a much deeper interest than even the most fascinating fictions:—fictions she did, indeed, occasionally read; but it was only in those seasons when the exhaustion of long-continued excitement in writing had rendered her incapable of close attention. The interests of the real were fast prevailing over those of the ideal world; her mind, every day, more and more needed the stimulus of an object, such as she could deem important; and she became indisposed to exertion, at the impulse of mere fancy, or personal feeling.

This marked change in her mind and habits of feeling, was evidently much promoted by the new scenes she witnessed, and the new friendships she formed in Cornwall. Before the time of her visit to Marazion, she had had too little opportunity of becoming acquainted with the sufferings and the wants of the poor. She knew, indeed, by report the evils that abound in the real world; but her experience had scarcely presented to her any other evils than those sorrows of the heart, and of the imagination, which

are either wholly created, or are aggravated by morbid sensibilities; and which, however amiable they may seem, are more or less *seclusive*, if not selfish, in their influence. Friendships—and literary friendships—and polished tastes, and the delights of fancy, and wit, and criticism, are fine things; and where they exclude either frivolity or grossness, they are good things; but if the heart be rightly disposed, they will sink in estimation, when we are called daily to administer relief to the urgent wants and the real sufferings of human life. And perhaps the instances are rare, if, indeed, such instances are at all to be found, in which laborious zeal in works of mercy, exists in union with a vivid relish of the pleasures of the imagination. Be this as it may, it was observable with my sister, that in proportion as her mind admitted the paramount claims which the sufferings of those around us have on our sympathies and our activities, she became less regardful of the gratifications of taste, and of the luxuries and sensibilities of the imagination, and more solicitous in all her engagements to pursue utility.

The three or four excellent persons at Marazion, whom my sister ever thought it her happiness to have known, were distinguished by their Christian zeal in every good work; and she at once admitted, and cherished, in her own character, the influence of their example.

The tendency of her acquaintance with Methodism, was also of the same kind. And while, as will be

apparent from her letters, she was far from being blind to the defects of that religious system, or converted to its peculiar opinions; she confessed herself to owe to it a new impression of some branches of Christian feeling and duty.

Early in the year 1816, while still at Marazion, Jane commenced her contributions to the *Youths' Magazine;* which she continued to supply, with few exceptions, during the succeeding seven years. It was with extreme reluctance, and not without the urgent persuasion of those to whose advice she was accustomed to listen, that she yielded to the repeated request of the conductors of that publication, to write statedly for it. She dreaded the bondage under which she felt such an engagement would bring her; she dreaded, especially, lest the necessity of writing at stated times, whether or not she felt a spontaneous impulse, should induce the habit of prosing; or should impair that feeling of sincerity, simplicity, and genuine interest, with which hitherto she had always written; and without which, to write at all, she would have thought an abuse of her talent, and a presumption upon that degree of favour she had won. Happily, these objections were overruled; and, soon finding herself successful, she felt a pleasure in the employment; and was incited to use her best exertions to improve, for the highest purposes, this opportunity of addressing constantly so large a number of young persons.

To a writer whose invention is fertile, whose judgment and taste are matured, and who, above all, has too much self-respect to allow him to sink into inanity or frivolity, the necessity of writing at stated times may be advantageous, and it may produce, at once, freedom, and simplicity of style. Under such circumstances, that fastidiousness which would substitute tame proprieties for faulty beauties, must be laid aside:—a subject having once presented itself to the thoughts, must not be dismissed, merely because it seems unpromising; and the mind, by the very feeling of being tied to an unpromising subject, is roused to make the greater effort. Thus it often was with my sister; and the result has been, that this collection of papers contains, perhaps, her happiest and her most useful compositions.

The "Essays in Rhyme, on Morals and Manners," were finished in the spring of the year 1816. Jane never wrote anything with so much zest and excitement, as the pieces composing this volume. While employed on them, she was almost lost to other interests: even her prevailing domestic tastes seemed forgotten, and in our daily walks she was often quite abstracted from the scene around her. In truth she had stepped upon ground new to herself, and felt an impulse which gave an unwonted vigour to her mind. Her impatience of pretension and perversity in matters of religion, and her piercing discernment of the deceptions of the heart, give a peculiar force and

pungency to many passages in the "Essays in Rhyme;" while others are distinguished by the same interchanging pathos and playfulness which had been displayed in her earlier writings. A few lines, perhaps, in this volume, may have seemed *too* pungent to some readers. This she fully anticipated, but would not shrink from the hazard. Her feelings and her judgment were averse to compromise, or to the cautious concealment of opinions. Some such concealment had been recommended to her by a friend, to whom the manuscript had been submitted, previous to publication: in reply to these suggestions, she says:—

"It is now time to refer to a former letter of yours, respecting certain passages in the 'Essays in Rhyme.' It is scarcely necessary to say, after having written them, that I do not agree with you as to the propriety of total silence on all disputed subjects. Had that plan been always pursued, what would now be the state of the world? I am very far from blaming Mr. Cunningham for writing the 'Velvet Cushion' (his doing it unfairly is another thing); and with regard to introducing particular sentiments in works of a general nature, it appears to me one of the best ways of doing it. Who ever blamed Mrs. More for poking the steeple into almost every page of her writings? What happened to Miss Hamilton for making the hero of her novel a Dissenter? or, which is more to my purpose, what has been the consequence of the severe sarcasms of Cowper upon the Church and its

ministers? The consequence is, indeed, that he is hated by the High Church party; but that does neither him nor his works any harm. What harm did he suffer from the review of his poems when they first appeared, by our old friend the *Critical Review*, when they said—'This is an attempt to be witty in very lame verse?' I grant it is probable that no proselytes have been gained to any party by what he wrote; but who will deny that the diffusion of the liberal sentiments that abound in his writings, has been of great service to the cause of truth and moderation? Do not suppose I am here placing myself by the side of Cowper—I am only pleading against the system of preserving a profound silence on all controverted subjects in works of a general nature."

To some criticisms of a different kind, she thus replies:—

"You will not be surprised, and I am sure you will not be offended, to see in how few instances I have availed myself of your criticisms, if you reconsider the nature of them—that is, how very few were merely literary. To those few I paid every attention; most of them had already been marked for correction, either by myself, or other critical friends; but I was disappointed to find so few of that description; and still more, to find so many relating to matters of *opinion*, which you would hardly expect I should give up. I cannot guess why the very same opinions—or creed, if you please (for I know that is a word you are particularly fond of),—which were,

I believe, expressed with quite as much plainness in 'Display,' should offend you so much less there. You say, indeed, that you have only remarked upon that style of language which refers to a *party*—not to a *principle:* but, on the contrary, I found not a single note upon those few passages in which I write as a Dissenter. If you mean to call religious sentiment *party*, I shall not dispute the term with you. Christianity has had a great many ill names from its commencement to this day. But they have never done it the least harm, nor ever will. Do you think I would condemn you for using a prayer-book, or kneeling at an altar—for going under water, or even for wearing a broad brim? No. But as I would not make my creed narrower than that of the Bible, so I dare not make it wider. 'There is no other name under Heaven, whereby we must be saved.' 'He that believes shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.' This is all I would contend for, and all, I think, that I have contended for, as essential; and if it is to this you object, I fear not boldly to say you are wrong. And my heart's desire and prayer is, that you may be led, as many a confident opposer has been, to what I must still maintain to be 'the only place—the feet of Jesus.'

"I think your prejudice—may I say your party spirit (for never does party spirit show itself so openly, or speak so narrowly, as when it embraces the sceptical creed)—has got the better of your good taste, in the

present instance; your taste is good, when left to its free exercise; but in several of your criticisms, I scruple not to say you have, under the influence of other feelings, betrayed a very bad one. For instance, you object to passages that are simple quotations from the Bible. Here I can speak quite confidently, in a literary view, that the effect of such quotations is good, and that they confer a dignity on the verse. Where, for instance, I have introduced, almost literally, those passages—'In Thy presence is fulness of joy'—'In My Father's house are many mansions'—I am sure that I am more classical than you, in your very ill-chosen remark upon them. That these expressions have been quoted a thousand times by 'Lady Huntingdon,' or 'Mr. Huntingdon' cannot render them at all less affecting or sublime; and to call such language 'religious cant,' is in my opinion 'irreligious cant.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS WRITTEN FROM CORNWALL.

MARAZION, *June* 18, 1814.

MY DEAR FAMILY,

It quite vexes me to trouble you with so much postage, but knowing you will be anxious to hear of our comfortable settlement, I would not delay writing. I cannot help sending some fond and longing thoughts towards home, now that at more than three hundred miles' distance I think of its present interesting, and I hope, happy circumstances. This letter will, I hope, find dear Anne once more among you! How we should enjoy it if we could be admitted for one half-hour! I long inexpressibly to hear all about it, with the history of the moving, and how you enjoy the new house—how Anne likes it, &c. &c. It is indeed having news from a far country, and in this strange land will seem quite refreshing. I trust you received my letter from St. Ives: we spent a quiet week there, in which we lost neither time nor money, as we went on with our usual employments. Our lodgings were very comfortable, but we did not quite like the people, and the town was so

deplorable that I felt in poor spirits all the time, and finding Mrs. Thomas was ready to receive us, we resolved to depart at the week's end. Cornwall is just what we expected. Fine hills, but not so high and abrupt as those in North Devon, much enriched with fragments of rock, very bare of trees, and divided by stone hedges, characterise this part of it. The shafts of mines appear perpetually, and the hills are dotted over with the huts of the miners, and mills where the ore is broken and washed. We have heard the high Cornish key, which rises to the highest pitch at the end of the sentences, to a degree that would not be believed if imitated. We hired a gig to come here, where we arrived at four o'clock yesterday afternoon. We did feel *alone* in the world as we drove along in this strange land at the ends of the earth. The afternoon was fine, and the road pretty. Within about a mile of Marazion we caught a view of the Southern Channel, and presently of the fine even bay on which we are situated. Next appeared St. Michael's Mount—a striking object; on the summit stands most picturesquely a fine minster, and altogether it forms a very beautiful and interesting object from this place. It is only a quarter of a mile distant from us, and a walk at low water. Isaac went over this morning. There is a small fort and several houses on the mount; I daresay father has a view of it somewhere. By the help of the map and gazetteer, you may easily form an idea of our situation. The bay, called Mount's Bay,

forms a fine sweep; it is surrounded by hills. On the western side lies Penzance, which we see distinctly, and it appears a very large town. Just opposite to it is Marazion, which consists of one long street, and several straggling ones. It is completely sheltered from the north and east, and is reckoned much warmer than Penzance. There is a fine turnpike-road, close to the sea, from hence to Penzance; it is three miles' distance:—we intend making an expedition there the first day next week that the weather permits. The country here is a complete change from Ilfracombe;—there, we were blocked up with abrupt hills,—here, all is wide and open. It is certainly a beautiful bay, and the surrounding country has a great air of cheerfulness. The country, too, is very populous, as many towns and villages are included in this small peninsula; and in Penzance and its neighbourhood there are a great many good families; and, I understand, all the conveniences of life are to be obtained there in perfection. We had not raised our expectations very high about the lodgings—such a cheerful look-out as at Ilfracombe we must not expect to find again. The house is in a street,—small but neat. The parlour, on the ground-floor, comfortably furnished, but small and not light. The bedrooms, both in front, and close together, are very comfortable—not quite so large, perhaps, as Isaac's at Ilfracombe. There is a very pretty little kitchen, on the right as you enter—our parlour is on the left. The great recommendation is, that we are

much pleased with the people; they are Methodists, as almost everybody is in Cornwall. Mrs. Thomas is a tidy, managing woman, and there is an air of such extreme order and cleanliness over the house, kitchen, and pantry, as is very pleasant. They have no children, and we are waited on by a very nice servant; moreover, Mrs. Thomas seems extremely anxious to oblige and accommodate us, so that, though the apartments are not all that we could wish as to size, we think ourselves altogether pretty well off, and desire to be thankful for being again taken care of, and furnished with another temporary home. At our leisure we shall look about us, especially at Penzance, but are quite contented for the present. There is a respectable old medical man here (our hostess says he is the most skilful man for miles around), who was recommended to us by a gentleman who was our neighbour at Ilfracombe, and who quite recovered his health by staying several months at Marazion last year. I think Anne would be quite reconciled to our situation, by its being directly opposite the post-office. This is the regular post town, and we see the mail stop at the door twice in a day. A London coach also passes every day; so that for letters and parcels we are very conveniently situated. We are well supplied with milk, as our hostess keeps cows, and makes butter; she will also make and bake our bread. There is a market for meat, once a week, and things may at any time be procured from Penzance.

Monday morning.—We are rather awkwardly circumstanced as to a place of worship where we should like to attend. There is a small Baptist place, not, we fear, very respectably supplied; a Methodist Chapel, and a Chapel of Ease, in the Establishment, where, I apprehend, we shall prefer attending, though it is by no means what we like to do. The Rev. Melville Horne, well-known in the religious world as an active and zealous missionary, and who has spent years abroad, is the settled minister there. He has been here three months, and a house nearly opposite ours is preparing to receive his family, who are expected this week. I daresay we shall become acquainted. He is said to be a most amiable, pleasant man. I heard him twice yesterday (Isaac being confined by rain), and was much pleased. He is not a High Churchman, and said many things that showed great liberality. Dr. Watts's hymns are always sung at the chapel, which make the prayers go down a little better. We are increasingly pleased with our landlady, and discontented with nothing but the parlour, which Isaac fears would in winter be too dark for him. We now sit at work in our own rooms, which are comfortable. We recovered from the effects of the voyage in a few days, and are now as well as usual. We set all to rights on Saturday, and are now once more quietly settled, for how long we know not. I think Mrs. Thomas is very desirous to detain us. I remain, dear family,

Very affectionately yours, JANE.

TO MRS. WITTY.

MARAZION, *June 20th*, 1814.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As this is one of our *Saints'-days*, I cannot do better than devote it to my friends: one letter I have already despatched to Ongar; and I am sure it is quite time to address you, as I believe my last letter was written to inform you of our arrival at Ilfracombe, though I think the fault has not been all on my side. The interval has been pretty well filled with incidents:—S. and A. have not been idle; you and the Prince Regent have been receiving company; Father and Mother have left the Castle House; we have removed to Marazion; and Buonaparte to Elba:—so that the world does not pay us the compliment of standing still till we have time to animadvert on its revolutions.

I would have waited a week or two longer, when I should have been better able to say how well we like our new situation, but that I hope this will now reach you before your friends leave you, as S. mentioned the last week in June for returning. To what is she returning! I hope to a life of usefulness and happiness. I have never known one better fitted to enjoy and to adorn the peaceful scenes of domestic life, than our dear S. Happy is he who is destined to be the companion of them!

I suppose by this time Mr. C. has been introduced

to his little grandson, with whom I may safely venture to guess he is pleased. I enjoy for you, my dear friend, the pure and real pleasures of the nursery. I am thinking too anxiously of dear Ann. The wide distance that separates us increases this anxiety:—if I could be near her, I should feel comparatively little; but to wait a five or six days' post for such intelligence, is what I dread. Yet He, to whom we should cheerfully commit her, is "nigh at hand, and not afar off." * * *

I told S. that we did not think of leaving Ilfracombe till August; but finding that during the summer, it does not often happen that vessels from Cornwall put into Ilfracombe, we determined to avail ourselves of the first good opportunity:—we regretted that one offered so soon:—we had scarcely twenty-four hours' notice. But our little affairs were soon arranged, and at nine o'clock on the evening of the 9th, we set sail, and a mild breeze wafted us from our dear Ilfracombe. We were tolerably well till about the middle of the night, when a fresh gale springing up, from that time to the moment of our landing, at nine o'clock the following evening, we suffered continual sickness. We landed at St. Ives, and took lodgings there for a week: on Friday evening we reached this place, where we had before engaged lodgings: they are not so pleasantly situated as those we occupied at Ilfracombe; but they are comfortable, and our hostess is a good woman who takes pains to please us.

Marazion is pleasantly situated on the margin of Mount's Bay, which forms a fine sweep : on the western side lies Penzance, nearly opposite to us, at the distance of three miles :—it is a fine ride by the seaside. This morning we have been there : it is a large and very pleasant town : and being so near, we can have many of the conveniences it affords. The views here are open and agreeable : St. Michael's Mount is a fine object, distant about half a mile, and Penzance and the adjacent villages very prettily skirt the bay. We were recommended to come here in preference to Penzance, as being milder, and it suits us better as being more retired. In spite of our nonconformity we shall probably attend at the Chapel of Ease, at which Mr, Horne now officiates, whose name I daresay you have heard. * * *

The following letter is the first of several addressed to a young lady—Elizabeth March, with whom Jane had made acquaintance in Devonshire. Her brother—Henry March—had lately come out from a family, gay in their habits, and had professed himself a dissenter, and a Christian in the Evangelic sense. To the service of the Christian ministry among Congregational dissenters he had recently devoted himself, and in that field of labour has well and usefully spent his years. His sister Elizabeth—Jane's friend and correspondent, followed her brother in his religious con-

victions: a year or two later she became the wife of Mr. Webb, a highly respected dissenting minister.

TO MISS ELIZABETH MARCH.

MARAZION, CORNWALL, *July 2nd*, 1814.

* * * The expectation of shortly leaving Ilfracombe, made me defer writing from day to day, thinking I should soon be able to tell you whither we were destined; but at last we went off so suddenly, that we had scarcely time to arrange our little affairs; and, although I have felt impatient to do so, I would not write immediately after our arrival here, that I might be better able to tell you how we like Cornwall. I have been sorry to hear that you are unwell, and I know that you do not complain of trifles. It is not surprising that exchanging the pure air of Devon for such as you are now inhaling, your health should suffer. Although there is so little temptation to go abroad, you must not neglect daily exercise. It is not complimenting London air too much to allow that it is better out of doors than in. I am not surprised that London makes you love Devonshire more than ever. The sight of it, especially after a considerable absence, never fails to make me low-spirited; and I scarcely know whether this is occasioned most by its *wretchedness*, or its *magnificence*. I entirely understand your affection for the old mulberry tree: there is a laburnum at Colchester which is quite

as good a friend of mine. I saw it blossom sixteen springs; and plucked a spray when I took leave of it, thinking it would be a great pleasure to ruminate over it now and then, but I believe I have never found time to look at it yet: it has lain ever since undisturbed, amidst a variety of similar relics, which have been abandoned to the same neglect.

In consequence of strongly urged advice, we determined, early in the year, to remove to Cornwall during the summer months, for I could not summon courage to undertake the voyage on the approach of the autumnal gales. We had not intended to leave Ilfracombe quite so soon; but a good opportunity offering, we availed ourselves of it; and after a passage more safe than agreeable, landed at St. Ives, from whence we crossed to this place; which has been recommended to us in preference to Penzance; and where we had already engaged lodgings.

I think you have not been so far into Cornwall; so I may tell you we are very pleasantly situated on the margin of Mount's Bay, which forms a fine regular sweep, surrounded by sheltering hills. Penzance, a handsome town, at the distance of three miles, is in full view; and with its adjacent villages, prettily skirts the bay. The surrounding country is open and cheerful —near Penzance, pleasantly wooded; and here and there are some shaded and rural spots. St. Michael's Mount, directly opposite to us, and accessible at low

water, is the most striking object in the scene. We have not yet thoroughly explored it; but it is much finer and more picturesque than we had expected, from such views as we had seen of it. Altogether, we are pleased with our situation; it is a complete contrast to the wild and solitary scenery of Ilfracombe. Being prone to form local attachments, I cannot at present decide impartially to which I should give the preference.

How long we shall sojourn in this land of strangers is quite uncertain. I feel with you, that I dare not look forward to distances I may never reach; and I too could think of next summer with the delightful hope of again seeing many that are dear to me: but I am afraid of expecting it, or of forming any plan beyond to-day: by painful lessons, I have learned that it is vain and dangerous to do so. Seldom, perhaps, till we have lived long enough to observe that the wishes we form for ourselves are either directly thwarted, or if indulged, that they wholly disappoint our expectation, are we sincerely disposed to say "Choose Thou mine inheritance for me." When such wishes appear very moderate and limited—falling far short even of the common objects of worldly pursuit—when we ask neither for length of days, riches, nor honours, but only for some one favourite comfort, we are almost ready to expect that such a reasonable request will be granted; and it is well if we are taught, either by being disappointed *of* it, or *with* it, that eager desires for anything short of the

favour of God, are displeasing to Him, and injurious to ourselves: there is a sweet feeling of security in committing our future way to Him, with an entire dependence on his wisdom and goodness, and a cordial acquiescence in his appointments. * * *

TO MR. JOSIAH CONDER.

MARAZION, *September 23rd*, 1814.

Months have passed since I wrote to you; and in the interval I have travelled a hundred miles further west, and seen many new places and faces: but this I can say (and I hope you will think it worth sending three hundred miles to tell you) that association with strangers, so far from alienating my thoughts and affections from those I have long known and valued, attaches me still more to them. I am surrounded by those who know that I am—Miss Taylor; but know not that I am —"Jane;" and it sometimes makes me sigh for a renewal of intercourse with those who, for that simple reason, have yielded me an unmerited share of their regard. The many follies, infirmities, and deficiencies which are intimately known to them, may, it is true, be partially and for a time concealed from strangers: but yet, I would rather be with those who "with all my faults, have loved me still." * * *

Nothing can be more tranquil and agreeable than the manner in which our time passes here; we are

both sufficiently occupied to preserve us from dulness; nor do we need other relaxation than the pleasure of conversing with each other in those hours of the day which we spend together. We have, however, some society here—more indeed than at Ilfracombe. I would gladly avoid the trouble of it; but I know it is good for me to be obliged to exert myself in conversation sometimes. * * *

I do not think my attachment to Nonconformity is likely to be at all shaken by my present circumstances;—on the contrary, I long to attend "among my own people," and to worship in the simplicity of the Gospel. Yet it is both pleasant and useful to associate with good people who differ from ourselves.

It is not from intention, but accident, that I am writing to you on this day of the month. You remember, I dare say, the advanced stage at which I am arrived:—at five and twenty I regretted the departure of youth: but now I am quite reconciled to being as old as I am. In looking back upon the past, nothing strikes me so forcibly, for future benefit, as the different sensations occasioned by a review of its *misfortunes*, and its *faults*. Upon seasons of care, anxiety, and distress, of which (though they have been comparatively few and light) I can remember some, I can reflect without a feeling of regret and uneasiness; indeed, there is a kind of satisfaction and complacency in looking back upon scenes of suffering: while the mistakes,

follies, and sins, that have marked my life, are sources of present and perpetual uneasiness. Of this, past experience and present feeling tend increasingly to convince me, that whatever afflictions may be appointed for me in future, if, in the course of the next ten or twenty years (should I see so many) I shall attain more holiness, I shall also enjoy more happiness than in the years that are past. To do quietly the duties of to-day, without ambition, and without anxiety, is to ensure comfort;—and comfort is a word that suits better the present state than happiness; and in truth it is all that would be desired by us if our thoughts were familiar with death and eternity;—if we habitually remembered that the time is short—that all we are most interested about is passing away, and that the flower we love best fadeth. * * *

TO MISS ELIZABETH MARCH.

MARAZION, *May 31st*, 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Although I quite forget the date of my last, I know that I have many times since felt much inclined to converse with you; and that I have not written before is only owing to the constant recurrence of some employment that is more immediately pressing, and whose plea is more readily admitted, because it is something that requires less exertion than writing, even to

so kind and candid a friend as you, to whom I know the most simple expressions of regard are more agreeable than a studied epistle. Some people think it a great recommendation to be able to write a "clever letter;" but, if there is anything I dislike to receive, or that I am unambitious of writing, it is a clever letter; by which I mean a letter that exhibits obviously an endeavour to be smart and pointed, or worse still, fine and sentimental. In this I am sure you will think with me. But to my languid mind, it is generally an effort to say anything beyond "How d'ye do?" and therefore I often delay the task in hope of an hour of vigour, till those who are oftenest remembered might fairly imagine themselves forgotten; but now, though I am flat and chilly, and have more than half a headache, I am determined to spend the morning with you.

What you told me in your last letter, made me almost envy the situation of those to whom religion appears as a glorious *novelty*, and who embrace it with all the ardour, and gratitude, and joy of a newly received message from heaven. They who, "from their childhood, have been taught the Holy Scriptures" have, no doubt, their advantages; but how liable are these advantages to be abused! It often happens, I believe, that persons who have been long familiar with the name of Jesus, as the sinner's Friend, are shamed out of their coldness and negligence by the warmth and energy of those whose eyes are newly opened to behold Him.

To inquiries such as those which you make relative to your not having felt the strong convictions, and the overwhelming fears that many experience in the commencement of their religious course, I have heard the most judicious Christians reply, that a holy walk with God, a humble consciousness of preferring Him and His service to any other thing, is a better and safer evidence of a real change of heart than a reference to the most remarkable emotions of mind at any particular time. The Bible does not specify any certain measure of terror, or any violent apprehensions of the Divine anger, as essential to true conversion. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is its simple declaration; and as the evidence that we do believe, and that our repentance is genuine, we must "bring forth the fruits of righteousness." True sorrow for sin, flowing from a contemplation of Divine mercy, which is called in the Scriptures "a broken heart," is surely a more acceptable sacrifice than the most fearful apprehensions of Divine wrath.

I cannot pass over in silence your hint on the subject of Church communion. Although it is nowhere mentioned as essential to salvation, yet the tender injunction of our Lord: "Do this in remembrance of me," is so forcible an appeal to our gratitude, that the neglect of it cannot be considered an immaterial circumstance. If the rules of a society calling itself a Church of Christ are so strict as to present any real obstacle to a humble

candidate, they must be unscriptural. And in some places, where a full written account of the candidate's religious history and feelings is made an indispensable condition of admission, such rules are unscriptural, though, even then, whether the exaction should be considered as a real obstacle, is a serious question. In most cases, I believe, a private conversation with the minister, or a Christian friend, is deemed sufficient; and whether so, or in writing, a simple and general profession of trust in the Lord Jesus, and of willingness to surrender heart and life to His service, is all that would be required. Many, no doubt, would be better pleased with a circumstantial experience; but I believe it is very rarely demanded, and I am sure it would not be by your present pastor. You know, too, that what is communicated on such occasions is not heard or read by a whole congregation, but only by the members of the church; and that in the absence of the candidate. The admission of a member is always considered as a pleasing and profitable, not an awkward or formidable service, by those who witness or are engaged in it. * * *

TO MRS. WITTY.

MARAZION, *September 19th*, 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is quite time to ask you how you do once again upon paper, though if you did but know it, I am very often making the inquiry in my thoughts. I have

so many far distant and dear friends to think now of, that my thoughts are become quite expert at the business, and fly from Ongar to Rotherham, and from thence to Axminster, Bridport, or London, with wonderful ease and expedition. There was a passage in your last letter, which brought old days so forcibly and suddenly to my recollection, that it made my tears overflow before I was aware. There is a long train of recollection, you know, connected with those days; but they are over and gone—all is settled, and well settled. For myself, as to external things, I was never so happy. I should rather say so comfortable (for that word best suits this world) as I am now. The last two years of my life have been so tranquil, so free from irritation, passed in a manner so suited to my taste and temper, with such a beloved and genial companion; they have been so occupied with agreeable employments, and so enlivened at times by pleasant society, that I have often thought, should any thing occur to alter my present lot, I should look back upon it as the brightest spot in my life. Ah well! I hope I am in some degree willing to commit the future to One who knows how to control it, and who will certainly prolong my present comfort, if it is for my good. * * *

TO MISS MARIANNE HORNE.

MARAZION, *October 16th*, 1815.

Your ceremonious commencement of our correspondence, my dear Marianne, was so discordant with my

feelings, at the moment of receiving your affectionate letter, that I determined to break through all restraint at once. But if you do not follow my example, I shall consider it as a signal for returning to the usual formality in the next.

Your kind letter was gratifying to me as a better evidence of real regard than the most elaborate epistle. I thank you for your many expressions of friendship. If I were conscious of having been a friend to you in every and the best sense, I should receive them with unmixed pleasure. I am however the more obliged for affection which must overlook so many deficiencies, imperfections, and infirmities, as a twelvemonth's intercourse has exhibited to your view. I say this, not as a flourish, but from the bottom of my heart. It was some time after your departure before I quite ceased to listen for the well-known step upon the stairs: for a few days I was miserably flat, and unable to take any interest in my employments. But I have by this time begun to be again sensible of the pleasures of regularity, and of the satisfaction of resting in some degree upon myself. This revival, however, is not accompanied by any diminution of regard towards those who are gone. The substantial pleasure of having *gained a friend*—of having one more heart in this cold world with which I can feel sympathy, and from which I may expect it, remains. And as for the rest, the relief and recreation of frequent intercourse —it is a pleasure which, however desirable, may be

cheerfully resigned, without at all impairing friendship, and which, indeed, might have been enjoyed independently of any feeling that deserves the name. * * *

TO MISS ELIZABETH MARCH.

MARAZION, *January* 16, 1816.

* * * Here we are surrounded by Methodists, and have the opportunity of knowing what Methodism really is. We often attend at their chapel: their preachers generally appear to be zealous and devoted men; and their preaching well adapted to be useful to the class of persons who are their hearers. I have never anywhere before seen so general a profession of religion, and there is every reason to believe it is more than a profession with many. A romantic little fishing town, just opposite to us across the bay, contains, we are told, a large society of experienced and fervent Christians, and the same is the case with many of the forlorn, desolate-looking villages in the neighbourhood, that seem in all things else a century behind the rest of the world. * * *

When one has been screwed up for some time with narrow-minded people, it is no small relief to meet with those of enlarged and liberal views; especially if their piety does not suffer by their intelligence. But I am indeed much inclined to believe that the *poor* in every sense, the mentally poor, are generally the richest in faith—that they receive the Gospel more simply *as it*

is, without reasonings and disputings, and live upon it more entirely, and more happily. * * *

MARAZION, *March 18th*, 1816.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

* * * We thank you dear father for your kind remembrance of us. We need not such assurances of your affection, but still they are gratifying, long as we have been banished from a nearer enjoyment of it. I never think without pain of the very long time out of our short life that we have been separated, especially from dear father's society, as for the best part of a twelve-month before we left Colchester he was from home, and since our removal we have been almost entirely away; so that our recollections of him are almost entirely confined to the dear old engraving days, and they will ever be among my pleasantest recollections. I doubt not that whenever we are permitted to meet we shall all observe in each other that Time has been carrying on his usual operations; but I am sure from both your letters you think I suffer more from anxiety than I do,—so that perhaps I may not be so much *care*worn as you fear. * * * I have, like *Mrs. Palmer*, an extreme dislike of "being uncomfortable," which generally disposes me to make the best of things, so that my letter gave you really a false idea if it made you think I am "bowed down under a weight of cares." * * * In her last letter Ann informs me that James Montgomery

has seen my specimens. I could not repeat all the handsome things he says of them, and only refer to his opinion as another weight in the scale. As a poet he is a *judge*, and he is one by no means given to flatter. * * *

TO MISS EMMA CONDER.

* * * You and I, my dear Emma, are, I fear, at present too little acquainted to do each other much good. Were I to be favoured with a closer acquaintance with your character, I hope I should prove myself your friend by making occasional observations, as might then appear suitable, and be equally ready to receive yours in return. But at this distance we can only draw a bow at a venture; and instead therefore of assuming the character of your monitor, which on every account would so ill become me, I would rather congratulate you on being so closely surrounded by friends from whose wise and affectionate instruction, and still more by whose example, you must be urged forward. In your two cousins you have invaluable friends, whose silent virtues are all eloquence. Were it my happiness constantly to enjoy their society, I should hope in time to reflect some of their rays; and if I might be permitted to point out particularly any point in their character, it would be that peculiar simplicity in their manner, proceeding from (I know not what better word to use) an —*honesty* of heart. It is no uncommon thing in these

days to see young women of cultivated minds and superior talents joined with grace and accomplishments, but is it not at least more rare to find these united advantages unalloyed by ill-concealed self-sufficiency and an artificial style of conduct that is at once detected even by superior observers? We have frequently remarked in our intercourse with your cousins that we never for a moment perceived the smallest attempt to set themselves off, as it is called, or the least approach to affectation in their manners; and the reason plainly is, that their virtues are built on a solid foundation, and that the only humility which can be genuine—a Christian humility, influences all their conduct. From bitter experience, my dear Emma, I can warn you against indulging in that kind of discontent with yourself, which, as a little self-examination will convince you, has its source in anything rather than true humility. You mention in your letter being in the habit of making painful comparisons between yourself and your friends; and so far as such comparisons tend to urge and stimulate us to an imitation of their perfections, it is well; but it, too, has a contrary effect, and leads us to view our own real or supposed defects with fretful despondency. I would not put such an affront upon your understanding, dear Emma, as to endeavour to persuade you that you have no cause for self-dissatisfaction, though from general observation I might say, with perfect truth and sincerity, that you have no occasion for discouragement, but that

you possess many advantages, both personal and relative, which demand your gratitude. But we have all too much occasion for deep humility when we look within and see how much is amiss there. But we are too apt, I fear, instead of looking *within*, to look *without*, and even when regarding the perfections of our most valued friends, are we not too apt to envy them the less important advantages, and those which are least attainable, than to emulate those solid excellences which are really within our reach? It is their beauty, their accomplishments, their talents, their taste, that we desire to possess; while their piety, their usefulness, their sweetness and humility are attainable if we pursue the same end, and make the same sacrifices to attain them. Religion, indeed, will not do everything for us; it will give us neither graces nor accomplishments, nor taste, but the blessings it offers are, a humble mind, a meek and lowly spirit, and it will enable us, not only with resignation, but with cheerfulness and gratitude, to take an *allotted* portion, and will teach us industriously to cultivate our one talent, if we have no more. * * * A large family is an extensive field for the exercise of all virtues, and calls for our self-denial, patience, and forbearance, and demands our activity, kindness, and generosity; and how much of the comfort of our future lives must depend on present conduct! When our parents are no more, and every opportunity of showing them respectful attention and grateful love is over; when our brothers and sisters

are dispersed, and no longer require our affectionate attention, it will be an unspeakable happiness if we can look back upon those days without painful reflection or self-reproach. I said, respectful attention: respect is a word I am fond of, for if well attended to in a family, it will go a great way towards promoting its order and happiness. A respectful conduct should by no means be confined to strangers, where common politeness demands it, nor even to our parents and acknowledged superiors. That familiarity which breeds contempt should be carefully avoided even among brothers and sisters of equal ages. Affection loses all its *gracefulness* without that accompanying respect which should never be lost sight of, even among perfect equals, and especially where we must acknowledge superiority. "Honour to whom honour is due," is a text well worth studying, and I hope I have, in part at least, acted under its influence in my own family. * * * I hope that not only in my feelings, but in my conduct also, I have remembered the respect which must ever be due to those from whom we hope and wish to *learn*. You have a brother, and I am sure you are not insensible to this privilege. If you are really solicitous to reap benefit from his society, be not contented to love and admire him, but let the deference you pay to his superiority influence your outward *conduct*, and your manner towards him, and you will find it will greatly promote and dignify mutual affection. * * *

TO THE SAME.

I am very glad, my dear Emma, that even at such a little distance of time you can look back on your visit to us with so much pleasure. It certainly evinces a previous disposition and determination to be pleased, since our house possesses few indeed of those attractions which would render it agreeable to most visitors; so that, except the charm of novelty, and the regard which you avow for its inhabitants, all the rest must be attributed to your own good disposition and good nature. But from many expressions in your letter, it is evident that some feelings of dissatisfaction mingle with the more agreeable recollections. I well know what it is to call myself to an account upon my return from a visit; and though I have sometimes found it a painful operation, it is doubtless a very salutary and a very necessary one, especially if the inquiry is not—What will my friends think of me? but—What do I think of myself? For that, indeed, is but a false and superficial repentance which is not awakened till faults are discovered by others. Our own consciousness of them ought to awaken the severest pain. Self-disapprobation, my dear Emma, is the first step towards improvement; without this *nothing* can be done—nor need any one (especially those who are young) be greatly discouraged, even should they upon examination find there is *much* to be done. This should stimulate to extra exertion, and by

no means lead to despondency. From sad experience, I know the wide difference between our planning and reforming; weak resolutions and half-efforts will never do. If we wish for amendment, we must make up our minds to *work hard.* Nothing but real *fighting* can ensure victory. I am persuaded, dear Emma, that after so many expressions of affection and esteem as you have bestowed upon me, I need not solicit your forgiveness for writing with that freedom which a few years' more *experience* of the vanity, weakness, and deceitfulness of the human heart may perhaps warrant me in attempting to advise you. I believe you will give me credit for the kindness and sincerity of my motives in so doing. You might, indeed, feel justly indignant were I to compliment you by denying what you acknowledge, and to attempt to persuade you that you had no occasion for self-reproach. You know far better than I can possibly do on what your dissatisfaction is grounded; it is not my business to inquire. I would only urge you by every argument, not to rest contented at this critical period with careless complaints or faint endeavours—but to be *absolute* and *prompt;* and that the disease may not be "healed slightly," do not set about external reformation, nor rest satisfied till you really *are* what you would *appear* to be. Desire to become a *sterling character;* and whether or not you excite the admiration of strangers, be ambitious to *respect yourself,* and to win the esteem of your best friends and nearest associates. A pre-

vailing desire for *admiration*, if not wholly incompatible with moral and religious improvement, is, I believe, the greatest bar to it. Indeed, dear Emma, the love and respect of one truly valuable friend is worth more than the admiration and flattery of the whole world. * * * It is true that when we are led to survey the recesses of the heart, and so to discover something of the chaos within —when we come to search our motives, and examine the merits of our best actions—the idea of restoring order is most discouraging, and we may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Truly writ, as it is impossible. How suitable, then, and encouraging are the promises of a new heart and a *right* spirit to those who really desire, and earnestly seek the blessing! Thus, then, we have no right to despond, no right cause to complain of the difficulties either from within or without, since such potent aids are promised us. Only this idea must not tempt us to relax our *own* exertions; we must watch as well as pray, for heavenly arms are provided on purpose that we may *fight* with them. But you, dear Emma, are too well instructed to need to be told, and, I hope, too considerate to need to be reminded, that the shortest, the safest, the easiest, the pleasantest, indeed the *only* way to conquer the difficulties of which you complain, is to seek heavenly wisdom; is to learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and you *shall* find rest and peace to your soul. We hear with pleasure from Josiah that you have come to the determination

of leaving home. Now, dear Emma, do not be hurt, or surprised, if, instead of sympathising with you on this occasion, I am more disposed to congratulate you, because I do indeed believe, provided the situation is not very unpropitious, you will be better and *happier* for the change. Great and ample are the rewards of self-denial;—and when from a sense of duty we do anything that appears unpleasant, we are often surprised to find how much less pain and difficulty there is in it than we expected. I am much mistaken if you will not in the present instance find this to be true. For besides the great pleasure of doing right, and making a laudable sacrifice—a change of situation, and especially should it be one that requires constant employment, may be most advantageous to your character, and conducive to your improvement. It is much more easy to follow up good resolutions, and to break old habits and begin new ones, in a new sphere and among different people. The necessity of constant mental exertion would be another important benefit, for the mind decays even more than the body, without regular exercise. And indeed, dear Emma, if you should be placed in a situation where this was required, and all your mental powers called into action, you would find a new world of satisfaction and enjoyment open to you. Constant useful employment gives you distaste for, a disgust at, *trifles*, and enables us to see them in their true significance. If the duties you are called to perform

are not considered as mere tasks or drudgery, but are pursued with interest and energy, I will venture to say that the pain you may experience from the first effort will be amply recompensed by a large amount of substantial pleasure and *satisfaction.* When I commenced my letter, I had no notion of speaking so plainly; but having been led to do so, I cannot prevail with myself not to send it. I shall be both pleased and obliged if you take it kindly, and I should indeed be rejoiced if anything I have said should stimulate and encourage you in your exertions, or even reconcile your mind to the change you have in contemplation. * * *

TO MISS ELIZABETH MARCH.

MARAZION, *April 24th*, 1816.

* * * I am glad you have heard and were pleased with Mr. Josiah Hill, and wish you knew him as a parlour companion:—one does not often meet with a person so completely intellectual.

Of Methodism and Arminianism, I knew scarcely more than the names before I came here, and am very glad of having seen them for myself. Cornwall certainly offers a favourable specimen of the Methodists: the good they have done is unquestionable, even by the most prejudiced witnesses. But what they have effected is fairly attributable to their zeal and laboriousness, rather than to their peculiar opinions. The ignorant

poor, when they become pious, are so almost exclusively "taught of God"—they are so little encumbered with human knowledge, that I believe it makes very little practical difference indeed whether they are called Arminians or Calvinists. The same unerring Spirit guides the minds of both to all essential truth. But does it not seem that opinions are of more importance and produce more decided effects on the more cultivated? I think I have lately witnessed some such effects. An Arminian who is much interested in his peculiar views, unconsciously perhaps to himself, very sparingly and partially exhibits in his preaching the *good news* of the Christian system:—he seems fearful of preaching a too free salvation for sinners. I am far from saying that this is the case generally with the Methodist preachers, but I am sure it was the case with the most zealous Arminian I ever heard or knew. But if peculiar opinions give a bias to the strain of preaching on one side, there can be no doubt that it does so in a much more baleful degree on the other. I would much rather, as I value my soul's safety, attend the preaching of an Arminian than of a *high* Calvinist. I have heard a few of these preachers, and have seen and heard much of the effects of such doctrine among the common people. It is said to be just now a fast-spreading evil among the Evangelical clergy of the Establishment; and it is spreading like a leprosy among the ignorant in all denominations. I believe there is scarcely any tendency

towards it among the regular dissenting *ministers;* but some of their flocks are infected. There is something so flattering, and imposing, and *comfortable* in the statements of preachers of this class, and the evil (except in avowed Antinomianism) is so much concealed, that it is no wonder that the doctrine is eagerly embraced by those who wish for a cheap and indulgent way of getting to heaven: nor even that many of the sincere and humble are led into the snare. If the accounts we hear are correct, it is not Towgood, but high Calvinism, that has induced Mr. —— to leave the Establishment: —it is said he objects especially to reading the Ten Commandments.

Having heard and seen so much of the evil tendency of these sentiments, I was very sorry to hear lately that they had found their way to ——: at least, what I heard led me to suppose that it was so:—it was said that Mr. —— had lately professed that a great change had taken place in his views: that he now perceived he had never before known or preached *the Gospel;* and that the minds of many of his most pious hearers had, in consequence of this change, been very much unsettled; but that they were now falling into his views. Now, though it would be very wrong to judge upon this evidence alone, yet this is so precisely the language of the party, that one cannot but fear that the fact is as I have supposed. * * * Many of the people, I have no doubt, are so truly Christians, that their own minds

may sustain but little injury, and their lives continue as ornamental to their profession as before, but it is not probable that this will be the case with the majority. It is certainly a temptation to a young man to preach in that strain, for nothing will so certainly ensure popularity.

I am glad that so favourable a change has taken place at ——, and hope Mr. —— may find some judicious guide to direct his inquiries; though, if he is indeed inquiring, he will doubtless be directed well at last. I have lately read an excellent paper on hyper-Calvinism, explaining some causes of its growth, and especially tracing it to a backwardness on the part of many professedly Evangelical ministers in introducing the grand truths of the Gospel, so that their hearers, having real cause of complaint, readily run to the opposite extreme.

You have, indeed, been led to the true, the only way of solving your difficulties on some of the deeper doctrines of religion. Every attempt to explain them has, to me, always rather increased than removed the difficulty and my own discouragement. But certainly, I should not fly to Antinomianism in order to escape from it. This system may, indeed, seem to remove the difficulty a step further off; but there it meets us again, just the same as before, unless the omnipotence and omniscience of God be disputed. But let us wait :—it is but a little while, and we shall comprehend something of the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God; though now "unsearchable, and past finding

out." How chilling are the very terms of controversy, and how unlike the language of the Bible! To live near to God, to walk humbly with Him, is the surest way of having our minds satisfied on these points. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him: He will show them His covenant." * * *

CHAPTER XIV.

VISITS—RESIDENCE AT ONGAR, AND AT HASTINGS.

THE consequences upon my sister's health and spirits, of the great and long sustained excitement occasioned by writing the "Essays in Rhyme," were such as seemed to render change of scene, and complete relaxation, necessary. She therefore determined to spend some part of the ensuing summer in Yorkshire. We left Marazion in the month of June 1816; and after an agreeable journey of a week, reached Masborough, near Rotherham, where Mr. Gilbert then resided. This visit afforded the most delightful and beneficial relaxation to her mind, by yielding her at once the lively enjoyments of a renewed intercourse with those most dear to her, and the pleasures of an introduction to the very intelligent and agreeable society of that neighbourhood.

The religious circles within which Jane Taylor was welcomed in Yorkshire, when on visits to her sister, Mrs. Gilbert, afforded samples of intelligence, of Christian feeling and of consistent conduct, of which she had seen very little at Colchester; and it was thus again that her views were expanded. She had lately,

as has been mentioned, formed friendships among zealous members of the Established Church — distinguished more by the fervour of their piety than by literary tastes. She now found literary tastes, and a general intellectual *zest*—less simple-minded, perhaps, in an evangelic sense—less purely evangelic—but yet undoubtedly sincere and genuine, as well as fruitful in works of Christian benevolence. What those changes are which may have come in upon English dissenting Christianity, in the course of fifty years, this is not the place to inquire; but it is certain that fifty years ago there existed a feeling in and among the larger congregations (perhaps the smaller also) throughout the midland counties, which made it a golden time for a popular religious writer,—and especially for a female writer. There was intelligence—there were habits of reading—there was the listening to noted preachers—Robert Hall the prince of them, which altogether raised some of these societies to a level, as to thought, taste, and knowledge, which no other religious communions of the time had reached; and a knowledge of which might have amazed some of those literary magnates whose only notion of the "sects" was that they were knots of self-willed and ignorant enthusiasts, of whom it would be well if England could be thoroughly cleared. Such were *not* the leading Dissenters of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the manufacturing districts, and a little way southward. In truth, some very small dis-

senting congregations in obscure towns might then have been named, within which as many books were annually read as would have sufficed for satisfying the intellectual hunger and thirst of the "Clergy, Nobility, and Gentry" of a county for seven years. What I have seen and known in several parts of England, warrants my risking the conjecture.

Six weeks were thus pleasantly passed in Yorkshire: in August we returned to Ongar, after an absence from home of nearly three years. In this interval my father had left the Castle House, and had removed to what had been a farmhouse, a short distance from the town: with this house and its garden, my sister was delighted; and felt the highest pleasure—a pleasure altogether congenial with her character, in being once again in seclusion with those she most loved. Her feelings on this return home are described in a letter of this date:—

TO MISS ANN MAXWELL.

ONGAR, *August 28th*, 1816.

* * * Why have you neglected to fulfil your promise of telling me something of yourself—body and mind? Remember that the surest way of making your letters interesting, is to let them contain particulars respecting yourself. I shall be severely punished, indeed, for having made "Egotism" the subject of one of my "Rhymes," if it should influence any of

my friends to refrain from those communications on which the interest of a friendly correspondence entirely depends. In truth, I have found it one of the inconveniences attendant upon making one's opinions public (and I assure you these inconveniences are not few), that others are apt to suppose one is always on the watch for those failings that have been censured; or that the censure or raillery was directed against some individual. I assure you it is much more from a knowledge of my own heart, than from observation on the failings of others, that I have written on the subjects I have chosen.

I wish this fine morning I could take a turn with you in your pleasant garden, and talk instead of write; or rather, if wishing were of any avail, I would wish that you could take a turn with me in mine, which I think you would enjoy. I must, however, tell you something of our movements. We stayed a fortnight longer with Ann than we proposed; the time passed pleasantly, and we were unwilling to part. I think, however, you who know my taste for retirement, and my dislike of general company, would have pitied me if you had seen the continual bustle of visiting, with which my time was occupied. The contrast with our mode of life at Marazion, was as great as it could be: perhaps the total change of scene was what I needed.

On the 13th of August we left Rotherham, and in a few days reached our dear paternal home, after an

absence of three years. It was, indeed, a joyful meeting; and when, that evening, we once more knelt around the family altar, I believe our hearts glowed with gratitude to Him who had permitted us thus to assemble in peace and comfort, and had disappointed all our fears. Here we are again in complete retirement; and a sweeter retreat I do not wish for. We are nearly a mile from the town, and surrounded with the green fields. The house is an old-fashioned place, with a pretty garden, which it is the delight of my father and mother to cultivate; at the door is a rural porch, covered with a vine. Here we are rarely interrupted by any one; and, although only twenty miles from the great world of London, we enjoy the most delightful seclusion. The rooms are large and pleasant, and the whole has exactly that rural air which we all so much admire. * * *

Jane's influence within the little society at Ongar was real and great, though noiseless, and of a kind of which it would be very difficult to render an account in words: —it was the influence of a superiority which every one around her recognised—to which every one gave way, readily, cordially, and unconsciously. Never was this superiority assumed, or claimed, or even taken for granted: it realized itself—one could not say how. At this time, Jane Taylor had acquired an extensive literary reputation—a fame, as a popular female writer,

which ensured her a flattering welcome almost wherever she went. And yet no stranger, incidentally entering the room where she was quietly taking her part in a Ladies' Working Society, would have surmised the fact, or have thought anything more than this:—That the daughter of the minister of the congregation at Ongar was there present—doing just what a minister's daughter is expected to do—setting an example of assiduity in a labour of charity.

To some individuals of this small circle, Jane's influence was peculiarly beneficial. One, especially, may be mentioned—now long ago deceased. Sarah Bingham—then by several years my sister's senior—was the daughter of a preceding minister, Thomas Bingham, one of Dr. Doddridge's students at Northampton. An early disappointment in love, and, I think, the unkind behaviour of a sister and other relatives, had gone near to overset her mind; at least, so far as to make her much too sensitive of unintended slights and affronts. She was, however, a woman of intelligence, and of some acquaintance with books, being the daughter of a well-educated and well-read man. She at once found in Jane Taylor—not one to supplant her, or to claim over her any superiority, but a delicate and considerate friend—ready at all times to stand at her side, and to assist her in maintaining the position due to her among the people, as their late minister's daughter and representative.

A philosophic observer might have watched with advantage the gradual sanative influence of Jane Taylor in restoring the mind of her senior friend. No *intimacy*, in Jane's own sense of the word, took place between the two—no correspondence resulted from this friendship. But whenever Jane was resident at home, Miss Bingham enjoyed frequent intercourse with her; nor failed, to the last, to give evidence of the benefit she thence derived in an increasing tranquillity—a self-possession, and a consciousness, so healing to the wounded in spirit, that there is in the world *one*, at least, by whom she is understood and esteemed.

During this visit at home, Jane and her mother projected a work, to be executed conjointly, in the form of a correspondence between a mother and her daughter at school. These letters were commenced at Ongar, and completed at Hastings, where we passed the whole of the following winter. The composition of her part of these letters, together with her stated contributions to the *Youths' Magazine*, furnished her with just so much literary employment at Hastings as was consistent with her health, which had materially suffered by the great exertions she had made during the preceding winter. She now devoted a much larger proportion of her time to reading than at any former period. The usual consequence of much reading she soon felt and regretted; namely, a great indisposition to the exertion necessary for writing. And, indeed, after this time, she never again

surrendered herself fully to the excitement necessary for productive efforts of the mind.

The months passed at Hastings were passed in complete seclusion from society;—it was, however, to my sister an agreeable winter; for though she could relish the pleasures of general society, when they came in her way, they were what she never sought or wished for, when deprived of them; and of the society of her dearest friends she had long been accustomed to be deprived. With the pleasures of regular employment, books, and fireside comforts, she was ever satisfied and delighted. Writing to her sister from Hastings, she says:—

"We have had a peaceful, comfortable winter: all I have wanted to make it as comfortable to me as formerly, was the same interesting employment. In the prospect of returning to Ongar, I feel keenly the pleasantness of the situation, and the affection of my family. The former is much more to me than you would imagine, from what you saw of me in a much finer country. There is a composure of mind and freedom from excitement which is essential to my enjoyment of the country; and its being then the time of the 'Essays' coming out, together with all the bustle and variety, totally destroyed that composure; but I can truly say,—

> 'I would not for a world of gold
> That Nature's lovely face should tire.'

And though the time of romance is over, I rejoice to

feel in myself an increasing capability of intellectual pleasure. Excuse me, dear Ann, for this pure egotism, and for reflections which to you, surrounded by so many pressing realities, must seem trivial. But to none of my married friends, except you, can I write of my own interests, without feeling that I am intruding upon theirs. I feel, in writing to them, that they are married. But I except you, dear Ann, not only because you are a kind sister, but because you retain the enthusiasm of other days—you are not hardened and blunted by the world."

The leisure enjoyed by my sister at Hastings was employed in maintaining intercourse with her friends.

TO MISS MARIANNE HORNE.

HASTINGS, *December 10th*, 1816.

If you knew the glow of pleasure and affection with which I take up my long-neglected pen, every suspicion of neglect which my silence may have occasioned would be dispelled. I know of few things that would give me greater pleasure than your taking a place at our new fireside; and as the best substitute for that unattainable pleasure, I do hope you will, as soon as compatible with your engagements, let me receive another of your interesting and ever-welcome epistles. * * *

Here we are enjoying as much comfort as I expect in this world. Our lodgings are pleasanter than

those we occupied at Marazion. We are close to the sea, and all the rooms command a full view of it. Hastings, however, affords by no means the quiet seclusion which we there enjoyed. In summer, of course, it is crammed with Londoners; and even through the winter many families remain; so that the walks, though very picturesque, are continually invaded.

* * * I think my last was written from Sheffield. We soon after took a painful leave of our dear sister, and returned, after three years' absence, to Ongar. Oh, what a pleasure it was to be welcomed by kind parents to a *home!* Nothing could exceed their kindness and indulgence all the time we were there; and after so long an interval, we knew how to value this affection. They thought me not looking well, and it has been my dear mother's constant business to nurse me up again during my stay. Our house stands alone in a pretty country: it is an old farmhouse—more picturesque than splendid—and therefore *it suits* both our tastes and our fortunes. I enjoyed exceedingly the three quiet months we spent there; all my love of nature returned in a scene so well adapted to excite it, and it was delightful to see our dear father and mother enjoying, in their declining years, so peaceful a retreat, and wishing for no other pleasures than their house and garden and their mutual affection afford.

Although I have dwelt so long upon our affairs and

adventures, I must a little longer continue the same strain, to thank you for the generous and candid praise bestowed upon my last volume. I do assure you that the sensible and sincerely expressed approbation of the friends I love, is far more gratifying to me than that of a world of strangers; and from *you* I feel especially pleased to receive this approbation; because the book contains some lines with which you must be so far from pleased, that nothing but genuine liberality could enable you to judge favourably of the remainder. I would that my spirit were as catholic as yours!

TO MISS ELIZABETH MARCH.

HASTINGS, *March 7th*, 1817.

* * * As I feel obliged to my friends for remembering me ever, I do not complain, though I may regret a long silence. Of all things, I dread having to do with *affrontable* people; and therefore have always endeavoured to avoid this disposition myself. Besides, as in the present instance I am chargeable with a long silence, I have no right to find fault with you. That feeling of self-importance which leads one to make a large demand upon the recollections and attentions of friends, is gradually cured by time and experience, if not by good sense and reflection; and altogether, it is, I hope, pretty well damped in me. For a few weeks during the last summer, I felt much pleasure in the thought

of being once more within reach of you: but that plan was abandoned, and I have now little expectation of seeing North Devon again. It is a country I shall always remember with interest, both on account of the friends I found there, and because it was the first romantic country I had ever seen; and that first vivid impression is such as will never be effaced. I am glad, however, that my North Devon friends are not fixtures, like its hills.

* * * I am sorry to hear of the unpleasant circumstances at ——. People will never understand that it is not religion, but *irreligion*, that causes these mischiefs. If "the children of God are peacemakers," surely the breakers of peace cannot claim Him for their Father. I remember Miss ——, and she was what you describe. I knew one in still humbler life at Marazion, of the same sort. She was a servant in the house we occupied there for a few months;—a Methodist, and of such slender abilities that she could rarely understand a common order, till it had been repeated once or twice; yet she was indeed "wise unto salvation." Her conversation (perfectly unaffected and unassuming) was, on religious subjects, enlightened and edifying. Her plain face beamed till it was beautiful with Christian love and peace. I remember her with affection and respect. How strange it seems, that in Christian societies so few should be found who thus *adorn* the doctrine they profess, in all things.

* * * How strange that those who know they must die should ever feel indifferent about the future world! It is one of the strongest marks of a depraved nature—one of the greatest wonders of the present state. I have sometimes thought that more might be done than is commonly attempted in education to familiarize the idea of death to the minds of children, by representing it as the grand event for which they were born; and thus making a future state the object of their chief interest and ambition. Perhaps something more might be done; but, after all, we know and feel that nothing but the mighty power of God can overcome the earthliness of the mind, and give it the discernment of things spiritual.

TO MISS ANNIE MAXWELL.

HASTINGS, *March 18th*, 1817.

* * * This fine weather reminds me strongly of Marazion. I look at the sea, and sometimes fancy I am on the shores of Mount's Bay; and sometimes wish myself on board one of the vessels we see passing down the Channel, which might in a few hours convey me to those from whose society I am separated. But though this may not be, the time is fast coming when there will be only a dark river to pass, in order to unite us. The indistinct ideas we have of the unseen world render it difficult to derive so much pleasure from such thoughts as they are fitted to yield. Yet, when we

recollect now soon this fearful stream must be forded, it is surprising that we can feel deep interest in anything beside. But, alas! our eyes are beclouded, and not so much by the fears of death, as by the cares and interests of life: at least it is thus with me. The longer we live the more we see of the weakness, deceitfulness, and vanity of our hearts; and of the inefficiency of outward circumstances to rectify these inward deep-rooted evils. I used to think, when I was more exposed to the common snares of the world than I have lately been, that if I were but completely secluded from it I should find it comparatively easy to make progress in the Divine life. But I have had the most humbling proofs that the evil lies within.

TO MISS MARIANNE HORNE.

HASTINGS, *March 18th*, 1817.

* * * Since I have been here I have looked back with more regret than ever to the short season of my intimacy with you. Until within a few days I have not conversed with a human being since I came to Hastings, except my brother and the people of the house. The dissenting minister of the chapel died very soon after we came here; since that time there has been no minister settled at the place. We have generally attended at church. Mr. ——, whom I mentioned to you, has preached during the winter, in

both churches; they have been unusually crowded, and much attention has been excited, at least among the common people: the higher classes complain of his Methodism. He preaches with much earnestness and faithfulness; and it is hoped will do good. * * *

I was sure, my dear friend, before your last letter convinced me of it, that, in your present solitude and banishment from external excitements, your mind would grow, and your graces brighten, so that when you are restored to the pleasures of society, you will be prepared to meet its dangers. Ah! it is easier to "keep the heart with all diligence" amongst common, than amongst interesting people, is it not? That the seat of the evil, however, is not in the world without, but in the heart, I have the fullest conviction. It may be wise, indeed, to fly from outward temptations; but if this is all, we do much too little. The experience I have had of life, and of my own heart, renders me (at least in times of sober reflection) increasingly indifferent with respect to future events. There is, certainly, this great advantage in having tried several different modes of life, that one can ascertain in what degree circumstances tend to influence the character and affect the happiness. I have been placed in situations such as I should have imagined, some years ago, would have made me extremely happy; and now I know that nothing *external* can do this. And though there are enjoyments that I have not tried, yet I see others in the possession of

them, and I observe in them the appearances of dissatisfaction. Thus I endeavour to check the inquiry which we are all so ready to make,—"Who will show me any good?" It is easier even to repress this inquiry, than to conclude the verse with sincerity—"Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me, and that shall put more joy in my heart."

Have you met with any of Madame de Staël's writings? I have just been reading "*Corinne, ou l'Italie*," and have been so deeply interested that it seems as though I had gained a new friend. It gives a striking description of Italy: as a *novel*, though of deep interest, it is in some respects faulty. But the profound reflections with which it abounds—displaying the most intimate acquaintance with the human heart, and the most just and elevated taste for nature and the fine arts—form its distinguishing merit. She is said to be, and I can believe it to be just, the first female writer in Europe. You may judge how much the book interested me, when I tell you that, lazy as I am, I made many pages of extracts from it. I have, however, had forbearance enough not to read another novel of hers which is in the library here; for, indeed, I have felt the enervating effects upon the mind of reading in succession several works of the lighter class. I have, however, with the one exception mentioned, abstained from novels: but too much poetry produces an effect of the same kind, and I have lately been taking *tonics;* that is, reading Robertson's histories of Scotland,

and of Charles V. I am now reading the Life of Mrs. Carter, in which, though there is much *literary trifling*, which is to me extremely disagreeable, yet I find what repays one for the perusal. I think you would be pleased with it, as her tastes and talents were so much of your order.

Do not be discouraged with regard to your qualifications for teaching, because you find the work laborious, and your pupils sometimes incorrigible. I believe it is your *forte*. But your being "apt to teach," cannot always make your scholars apt to learn.

It was mere forgetfulness at the time, that I did not give you the history of the Lascars, and of the interesting wreck which happened a few days after you left us. I fully intended to do so, but forgot it when I next wrote, and now it is too much out of date. Poor Andrew, the sick stranger, remained three months under the care of Miss Maxwell. She was entirely the means of restoring him to life; and she sent him away completely equipped by her own hand. * * *

CHAPTER XV.

RETURN TO ONGAR—RELIGIOUS FEELINGS.

In April of the following year we left Hastings; and Jane spent some weeks with her friends, in and near London; after which she once more returned to Ongar. It was about this time that she first perceived an induration in the breast, which continued, during the following years of her life, to hold her in a state of constant apprehension, and at length proved fatal.

My sister's religious comfort had been, for some time, gradually increasing; while the pensiveness and diffidence of her temper seemed to give way to the influence of matured judgment, and confirmed principle. Her religious belief had long been settled; but she had failed to apprehend, with comfort to herself, her own part in "the hope set before us in the Gospel." It was at length, rather suddenly, in the summer of the year 1817, that the long-standing doubts as to her own personal religion were dispelled; and she admitted joyfully the hope of salvation. The extreme reserve of her temper, as well as her want of religious comfort, had up to this time withheld her from making an explicit profession of her faith in Christ, and joining in the commemoration

of His death. Now, however, this reluctance gave way.

A letter addressed to her sister, written a few months afterwards, shows that her views on the subject had not been uninfluenced by her intercourse with her Wesleyan friends in Cornwall. She says:—

"My mother told you of my having joined the church. You may have supposed that I was frightened into it by my complaint; but I feel thankful that this was not the case; for it was not till after I had consulted Mr. Clyne that I felt any alarm about it; nor had I before any idea of its being of a formidable kind. My mind, all the summer, had been much in the state it has been in for years past, that is, unable to apply the offer of the Gospel to myself; and all confusion and perplexity, when I attempted to do so. One evening (about three weeks before going to London for advice), while alone in my room, and thinking on the subject, I saw, by an instantaneous light, that God would, for Christ's sake, forgive my sins: the effect was so powerful that I was almost dissolved by it.* I was unspeakably happy; I believed that had I died that moment I should have been safe.

* It scarcely seems necessary to caution the young reader against a misinterpretation of these expressions. Nothing *preternatural* was supposed by my sister in this instance to have taken place. She simply means that the gloom, or confusion of mind, which had long distressed her, was suddenly dispelled by a more just view of the great truths of Christianity. Her temperament was very far from being that of the enthusiast, and none who knew her would impute to her a tendency to indulge illusory religious excitements.

Though the strength of the emotion soon abated, the effect in a great degree remained. It was in this state I went to London; and when I heard, what was to me wholly unexpected, I could not but consider the change in my feelings as a most kind and timely preparation for what, but a few weeks before, would have overwhelmed me with consternation and distress. As it was, I heard it with great composure; and my spirits did not at all sink till after I returned home. Since then I have had many desponding hours, from the fear of death. The happiness I enjoyed for a short time has given place to a hope, which, though faint, secures me from distress."

Soon afterwards, Jane accepted an invitation from a beloved friend at Reading, to pass the winter there: she also spent some weeks with her kind relatives at Oxford. She left Reading early in the following spring, and after spending a month near London, once more returned to Ongar. During this winter, the symptoms of the disorder above-mentioned became more specific and alarming: she had before received the advice of eminent surgeons in London; and at Reading she was daily under the care of a very highly-esteemed medical friend, whose anxiety for her recovery could not have been greater had she been a daughter. This gentleman (father of the friend with whom she was a visitor) interdicted to her, absolutely, all literary labours; indeed, she had now begun to feel the excitement of composition to be

directly injurious to her health; and after this time she wrote only occasionally, and at distant intervals.

The summer of the year 1818 was a season of severe and continued sickness in our family. Jane herself, one of her brothers, and her father, were, in turns, confined for several weeks by dangerous illness. In her anxiety for those dear to her, she so much forgot herself, that her own alarming complaint seemed quiescent; and in the autumn, when family comfort was pretty well restored, she appeared to look more cheerfully upon life than lately she had been wont to do; and consented that arrangements should be made for increasing her comfort at home. With this view she once more fitted up a study, to which she became as strongly attached as to any she had ever occupied.

Believing herself to be now likely to remain at Ongar, she actively engaged in works of Christian charity. During a former abode at her father's house, she had originated a Ladies' Working Society for the benefit of the poor, and to the meetings of this society she gave her attendance whenever she was at home. She became also a constant and most laborious teacher in the Sunday-school, and continued to be so long after it was apparent that the exertion exceeded her strength. It was in the sedulous and affectionate instruction of the children of her own class that she delighted; and so far was she from assuming any right of superintendence over her fellow-teachers, that she retreated as much as

possible from the precedence which would gladly have been yielded to her; doing less, perhaps, in matters of general direction, than she might have done with propriety and advantage.

My sister was in nothing an enthusiast; she was not therefore supported through the fatigues and discouragements that attend such laborious duties by those ardent feelings or sanguine hopes, which often aid the benevolent activity of young persons. The reverse was too much the case, and, whenever good appeared to result from her labours, it seemed to take her by surprise. Nor were her early habits or her tastes much in unison with exertions of this sort. Whatever she did of this kind was done simply from a strong conviction of the obligation of Christians not "to please themselves," but to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The influence of principle over her mind became still more conspicuous when she was called to take her part in promoting the objects of the Bible Society in her neighbourhood. For that publicity and those business-like forms which seem inseparable from the conduct of this and similar institutions, were peculiarly in opposition, if not to her judgment, at least to her habits and her feelings; yet when she was convinced that it was not practicable fully to attain the important ends of the society by silent and unconnected exertions, she submitted to the apparent necessity of the case, and took her part in associations and committees.

Besides the attention bestowed on the children of her class on the Sunday, Jane instructed them in writing and arithmetic one afternoon in every week. Labours of this kind were agreeable to her, because she found in them what is needed by minds devoid of enthusiasm—a direct and perceptible benefit resulting from her exertions.

During this period my sister wrote fewer letters than she had been wont to do, yet dropped none of her epistolary connexions. The following letters belong to the time of which I am speaking :—

TO MISS SALOME GOODRICH.

ONGAR, *August 23rd*, 1817.

MY DEAR SALOME,

When I heard of your being suddenly summoned to attend your brother, I felt an immediate desire to write to you, not from the idle expectation that I could say anything to lessen your uneasiness, but from a feeling of true sympathy which similarity of circumstances awakened. I asked for your address when I wrote to Ann; but was still dubious whether to trouble you with a letter, when the arrival of yours quite determined me. I thank you for it, and I thank you still more for finding any pleasure in writing to me, and for the assurances of your kind recollections. They are, I assure you, acceptable. I have learned to value a little *love* more than many times the quantity of *praise;* and when I receive

expressions of affection from any one who, I know, in some degree understands me, and who has had opportunity of observing many of my faults, I feel both obliged and *comforted.*

I was truly glad to hear a better account of your brother's health. I think you cannot yet have felt more desponding than I have formerly done about my brother: for a considerable time I was quite persuaded that he could not recover; and whenever I allowed myself to entertain any hope, I felt all the time a secret conviction that it was wilful flattery. Yet now—I would say it with thankfulness—he is so far recovered as to remove all immediate anxiety. I know not whether there is anything encouraging to you in this; but it *is* encouraging to know that the same Almighty Friend who spoke the healing word in one case can do so in another, and assuredly *will* if it be really desirable. He who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," still regards the prayers and tears of a sorrowing sister. I used very often to say, "Lord, if Thou art here, my brother shall not die;" and I used to try to add, "Thy will be done," and if ever I can say this with sincerity it is when I take pains to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God, and think how *certainly* what He does is best. And even with respect to the spiritual interests of beloved friends, where certainly acquiescence in disappointment is most difficult (perhaps in this world impossible), even in this case there is great consolation in

recollecting that the Judge of all the earth will do right We are not more benevolent or compassionate than He, and it is with this simple persuasion that I find it easiest to repel those hard and rebellious thoughts of God, which certain passages to which you allude are so apt to excite. We may be sure that if we put any construction upon them that is in any way injurious to the Divine character in our minds, it is, it must be, a false construction. I think there is greater encouragement to pray for the salvation of those dear to us than for anything, except our own. There are, indeed, many instances of the prayer of faith being answered at last in such cases: but it should be the prayer of *faith*, not a desponding, distrustful prayer. "When ye ask, *believe* that ye shall receive, and ye shall have."

I do not know whether your removal to —— was agreeable to you or otherwise. Your attachment to —— was, I believe, *local*, and one may suffer in parting from places, as well as from persons. I know you must regret the beautiful scenery you have left, especially as all you have thought and felt in that period of life when the thoughts are most lively and the feelings most keen, is inseparably connected with it. There the illusions of youth have been cherished; and whatever scenery may surround you when they begin to fade, it will inevitably appear less enchanting.

I am so perfectly acquainted with the whole history and mystery of the feelings you describe, that you need

not expatiate on that subject. Madame de Staël, who seems to have felt everything that a susceptible mind can feel in this world, has some admirable passages on that very subject. In the prospect of quitting society of a certain kind, she says :—

"Il me semblait que j'entrerais en possession de l'univers le jour ou je ne sentirais plus le souffle desséchant de la médiocrité malveillante." Again : "On est honteux des affections fortes devant les âmes légères : un sentiment de pudeur s'attache à tout ce qui n'est pas compris—à tout ce qu'il faut expliquer—à ces secrets de l'âme, enfin, dont on ne vous soulage qu'en les devinant." Again : "C'est en vain qu'on se dit, tel homme n'est pas digne de me juger ; telle femme n'est pas capable de me comprendre : le visage humain exerce un grand pouvoir sur le cœur humain ; et quand vous lisez sur ce visage une désapprobation secrète, elle vous inquiète toujours, en dépit de vous-même ; enfin, le cercle qui vous environne finit toujours par vous cacher le reste du monde."

I have not given these extracts to fill up my letter, but because I thought they would please you ; though perhaps it is necessary to be somewhat acquainted with her style to enter fully into them.

After all, a little, or perhaps a great deal of Christian humility is the best antidote to the uncomfortable feelings generated by mixing with society either above or beneath one ; and the simple desire to do good to others will dissipate in a moment a thousand unfavourable feelings.

Do not suppose I am in your debt in affectionate and agreeable recollections of the hours we spent together; and believe me to be very affectionately your friend.

TO MRS. GOLDING.

READING, *January 20th*, 1818.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I have indeed longed to tell you how much I have felt for and with you since I heard of your severe illness; and being myself, at the time the account reached me, considerably indisposed, and in low spirits about my complaint, I felt a peculiar sympathy with you, thinking it probable that, after being so many years connected in intimate friendship here, we might in a very short time recommence our intercourse in another world. However this may be, we may each of us feel persuaded that it cannot be many years before we enter that world. That we should either of us see old age is improbable. Oh that this quickening thought might have its due influence!

I have still occasional pain, which keeps alive anxiety; but on the whole my spirits are pretty good. I endeavour to cast *this* care upon God: and especially to impress my mind with the consideration that, even if my most sanguine hopes of recovery should be realized, it would make no *essential* difference in my prospects. There is no cure for *mortality*. Attention and supreme regard to my eternal interests is absolutely necessary,

independent of all immediate considerations. Yet I feel the use—the benefit of this perpetual monitor, and pray that its voice may not be heard in vain; for, after all, the most threatening afflictions are vain, unless the Spirit of God makes them the means of good to us. This, too, I have strikingly experienced. But how encouraging under all discouragements, is that simple promise—"Ask, and ye shall receive:" especially when we reflect that God, "who cannot lie," *has given it to each of us.* This may encourage us to ask, not only for salvation from the wrath to come, or for just grace enough to save us at last, with which it would be easy to be contented: but for great spiritual blessings—eminent spirituality of mind—"a life hid with Christ in God," so as to have at last "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God." * * *

TO MISS ELIZABETH MARCH.

LONDON, *May 20th*, 1819.

* * * I am come to London for a few days to execute some home commissions. These fine showers that are making the hills and vales rejoice, are making London more dreary than usual; and they confine me to a dull apartment, where, in rather lower spirits than are common to me, even in London, I sit down in perfect solitude to seek your distant society; my brother is out for the whole day on business. Solitude in the

country is sweet; but in London it is forlorn indeed. So you see all things conspire to make this a very animated composition.

My health has not been so good this spring as during the past winter and summer; for this there is "a needs be." But though I believe these continued warnings to be good and necessary, yet *fear* seems to have an unfavourable influence upon my mind; inasmuch as I am apt to suspect the genuineness of prayer that is rendered more fervent than usual by an apprehension of danger. I feel regret unspeakable in looking back upon those past years of health and vigour that were devoted to self-pleasing. And yet is there not "all consolation," and consolation *for all*, in the unqualified offers of the Gospel, and in the simplicity of its declarations?—"Daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee:"—what needs one more than this? and surely nothing less will do—not at least for those who are obliged by some threatening disease to realize their own mortality, and to look at eternity, as those who are in sound health cannot see it. In comparing the temperature of my feelings with yours, I was discouraged: yet I know that religion does not alter the constitution of the mind, any more than of the body. In you, ardent and energetic; in me, languid and phlegmatic, it would never assume the same appearances. They, however, are doubtless the happiest Christians the constitution of whose minds is the most

favourable to the *life* of religion. But I feel that these considerations will not serve as an excuse for me, seeing that "God is able to make all grace to abound in us also."

Monday Morning.

I heard yesterday three good sermons. * * * That in the evening by a plain Methodist preacher; the best, I thought, of the three—that is, the most to the grand purpose of preaching. Why do we not hear such sermons oftener? Some ministers appear to be under an unaccountable infatuation; as if they were afraid or ashamed to come to the point;—as if every subject connected with religion were to be discussed in preference to that which is the foundation of all;—as if they would rather direct their hearers to any surrounding objects than immediately to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." How little do they consider the disappointment they occasion to those of their congregations who go, Sabbath after Sabbath, hungering for "the bread of life"—who need the consolations of the Gospel!

TO MISS MARIANNE HORNE.

ONGAR, *June 7th*, 1819.

If the frequency of my letters bore any proportion to the value I set upon yours, I am sure, my dear friend, you would be weary both of them and of me. Never,

since the days of romance were over with me (or perhaps I might date a little later than that), never since the termination of a correspondence of unusual private interest, has letter-writing been in itself easy or agreeable to me; though, as a means of maintaining friendship with a few I love, I value it as highly as ever. It was extremely easy to write at that period of life, when "realities appeared as dreams, and dreams as realities." Oh, the sheets I have despatched about absolutely nothing! It is easy, at any time, to write when interesting facts are to be related, and when hopes and fears are keeping the mind in perpetual agitation. But this is rarely the case during the greater part of our course. When the current of life is seen near its rise—sparkling amid rocks and hills, and meandering through flowery recesses,—it is entertaining enough to trace its windings; but when it has reached the plain, and glides in a broad and even channel for many a mile, though its incessant flow towards the boundless ocean may afford subject for pensive reflection, there is little to invite description.

Thus I often contemplate my own course;—the illusions of youth are completely over;—I think there are no circumstances that could now cheat me into a belief that life is, or could be, very different from what I now see it to be. I might indeed be more busy; and so have less leisure and inclination to moralize about it; but this would not alter the case. "Then I saw that this also is vanity"—is the confession that must be

extorted from every heart, as one scheme of happiness after another has had its trial. Perhaps it was after some similar experience that David said—"I shall be *satisfied* when I awake in Thy likeness." When we have felt that nothing else can satisfy the mind, then we are constrained to look to the Fountain of happiness. * * * It is not strange that the wicked should go on in their wickedness; but is it not strange that those who know anything of religion should not adorn it more? This is the discouragement. Yet perhaps there are many "hidden ones," who, unknown to their fellow-Christians, are living near to God, while those who stand foremost in the church are content "to follow Christ afar off." * * * I rejoice to hear from a mutual friend that you are actively engaged in doing good. There is something stimulating in reading Paul's salutations to the good women of his acquaintance;—he evidently singles out those for especial notice who were most active and zealous in good works—"Priscilla, his helper in Christ Jesus"—"Mary, who bestowed much labour on them"—"Phœbe, a succourer of many:" while we may imagine that his more general remembrance—"To all the saints that are with you"—refers to others, a little resembling those modern professors of Christianity of whom charity is bound "to hope all things." How pleasant and cheering is it to look at the few who are not of this doubtful character; and how delightful when those who are most dear to us

give us this pleasure! * * * This increase of piety in our dearest friends is *real prosperity;* and when we think prosperity of any other kind very desirable, we forget ourselves, and view the world with the worldling's eye. * * *

TO MRS. WEBB (MISS ELIZABETH MARCH).

ONGAR, *September 14th*, 1819.

* * * I truly rejoice with you in the happiness of seeing another of those most dear to you walking in the truth. *This is family prosperity.* How weak is our faith when we suffer anxiety for any other kind of success to exceed the desire for the endless happiness of those we love; and how little do we feel like Christians, when we are surprised and mortified to see them encountering those trials and disappointments which we know to be the most usual and effectual means of promoting spiritual life. I have just received an account of the severe trial of one, of whom, judging as the world judges, one should say that severe affliction was not needed. But God sees not as man;—those whom He loves best He ordinarily chastens most, that they may be "seven times refined." "To him that hath shall be given, that he may have abundantly." * * * Poor Mrs. ——, what an unhappy life hers must be! unspeakably more unhappy than it would be if she were wholly destitute of that "little religion," as it is called, that she has! To see age tenaciously clinging to the

receding world, is the most melancholy and disgusting sight this evil world presents. * * * In so small a society as that with which we are connected, her zeal, for want of stimulus, is apt to sink into total torpor. In this respect there are advantages in living in a large town, where the zeal of the few keeps the lukewarmness of the many from freezing. I feel heavily the peculiar responsibility that attaches to me as a single woman, remembering that of such it should be said that "she careth for the things of the Lord;" while, partly from indolence, and partly from a sort of infelicity in dealing with others, I am too apt to recoil from those very duties which seem to lie most in my way. "She hath done what she could," is a sentence which often strikes painfully on my conscience. It is high praise, and what sacrifice can be too great to deserve it? * * *

CHAPTER XVI.

VISITS AND CORRESPONDENCE FROM ONGAR.

THREE or four years were thus passed at home by my sister, in the quiet discharge of domestic and religious duties; interrupted only by occasional visits to her friends. During this time, the slow progress of her complaint kept her mind in a state of anxiety, and deterred her from attempting to execute some literary projects which had often employed her thoughts. Besides keeping up her correspondence with her friends, and writing the papers before mentioned, she composed, I believe, nothing but the fragment entitled "Philip;" and two or three pieces expressive of personal feeling.

Besides the delicate and declining state of her own health, my sister's thoughts were much occupied by the continued illness of her father. During these times of domestic affliction it was impossible for her to abstract her attention from present interests. In the autumn of the year 1820 she attended him to Margate; and had the pleasure of seeing her beloved

parent surmount a disorder which had long threatened his life.

Early in the following year Jane again left home, to visit her sister, Mrs. Gilbert. She continued at Hull more than four months; in which time she made excursions to York and Scarborough. In this visit she seemed to enjoy the pleasures of general society more than at any former time. Yet it was but for an hour that the flattering attentions she often received abroad ever drew away her thoughts from the domestic circle within which her heart reposed.

The following letter belongs to this time :—

YORK, *April 20th*, 1821.

MY DEAR FAMILY,

* * I set off at noon on Monday, from Hull, in the steamboat for Selby; from whence, about seven in the evening, I took the coach for York. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and I enjoyed it much. The Minster is indeed overpowering. Robert Hall, who lately saw it, says, all the angels in heaven could not have built it. After that, the Quakers' humble Asylum interested me most. We are just now going to hear the Romish Service in a nunnery. To-morrow Cecil and I propose to return by the coach and steam-packet to Hull; as on the following day is the grand Sunday-school anniversary, for which Ann and I have written the enclosed hymns; and they have presented us with so many copies, that we thought we might

save ourselves the expense of printing if they chose to use any of them at our own anniversary. Mr. Pritchett's house is close to Micklegate Bar, where the pole on which the Duke of York's head was stuck is still visible. Every turn here is interesting. * * *

Saturday, on board the Steam-packet.

A pleasant day. Cecil and I left York this morning, after a very pleasant visit. The service at the nunnery was exceedingly interesting. There are about thirty nuns; and we saw them at the close of the service—it being Good Friday—all kneel around the altar, while the priest showed to each a piece of the cross, in a silver box. Their dress and movements were most graceful and interesting.

This excursion appeared so much to have improved her general health, that there seemed reason to believe that, as long as her mind could be agreeably occupied, without too much excitement, her complaint might remain in a quiescent state. In this hope, her many kind friends in Yorkshire, Devon, and in the neighbourhood of London, warmly urged her to pass her time in successive visits among them. She felt deeply the kindness of these invitations; and believed also that this frequent change of scene, and these social pleasures, would be more likely than any other means to promote her recovery. But she determined rather to remain at home.

This determination, I have reason to know, was influenced chiefly by a regard to her religious interests; for she had felt, with regret and fear, the effects of continued external excitements, in diverting her attention from objects of supreme importance. She trembled at the danger of losing sight of her highest hopes; she wished now to call home her thoughts, and to converse with her own heart, without interruption. Such were the motives which she repeatedly avowed to those with whom she was accustomed to converse confidentially, when urged to avail herself of the kind invitations of her friends,—"I find," she often said, "that *home* is the place that suits me best."

It was, therefore, with a free and deliberate preference of the interests of the soul to those of this life, that she returned to seclusion, and to the offices of Christian charity, when she had every facility and strong motives for pursuing a different course.

The house at Marden Ash, near Ongar, in which my father had lived eight years, being at this time let, with the farm to which it belonged, he removed from it to a house which he purchased in the town. This new abode, although altogether more commodious than the last, was so much less suited to my sister's tastes, that she felt many regrets at the removal, and it evidently increased the depression of her spirits; and thus hastened the progress of her disorder.

In the autumn of the year 1821, attended by one

of her brothers, and a nephew, she visited Margate, where she placed herself under a new medical direction; and with the view of giving full effect to the course of remedies recommended, she passed the following winter months near London, where she could have the advantage of constant advice. The months passed in this way gave her the pleasure of daily intercourse with a new friend, to whose kindness and Christian counsels she thought herself deeply indebted. At this time, her opinion of her own case had become decidedly unfavourable; though still, when alarming symptoms abated, she admitted the hope of recovery. The state of her mind, under these circumstances, was neither so tranquil as she wished, nor so much agitated as those who knew the timidity of her disposition had feared it would have been.

Her feelings are described in a letter to Mrs. Gilbert, from which the following passages are extracted. After informing her sister of the unfavourable opinion of her case, which had been given by two surgeons whom she had lately consulted, she says,—

"You may judge, then, dear Ann, what my expectations are, when I calmly and steadily view my present circumstances. Of late, too, I have felt my general health more affected than hitherto. But it requires *much* utterly to extinguish the hope of recovery; with God nothing is impossible. Besides, it is really difficult, while occupied with the usual pursuits of life, and while

able to go in and out much as usual—it is difficult to realize the probability of death at hand. But it comes strangely across me at times when, forgetting it, I have been planning as usual for the future. Then a dark cloud overshadows me, and hides all earthly concerns from my sight, and I hear the murmuring of the deep waters. I expect I shall have deep waters to pass through—already I feel the sting of death, but am not without hope that it may be taken away."

Though the hope of recovery continued to agitate her mind, still her principal anxiety related to her hope of the better life. The doubts that at times distressed her took their rise, for the most part, from the high notions she had formed of the requirements of the Christian life. Of the way of salvation, as a free and full provision of mercy, she seemed to have a clear apprehension; but she had long believed, that, from the want of a sufficiently explicit, particular, and authoritative exposition of the *law* of Christ, as given to us in His discourses, the *Gospel* is extensively and fatally abused in the professedly Christian world; and she trembled lest the flatteries of self-love should delude herself into a similar presumption.

It will be seen from her letters with how much pleasure she listened to those preachers with whom the great doctrine of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ is the principal subject, and who, following the example of the Apostles, make the freest offer of

this salvation to their hearers. But still she listened with jealousy to the glad tidings thus proclaimed, unless constantly accompanied with a fearless, distinct, and uncompromising exposition of the parallel truth, that "every one shall receive according to his works." Her frequent expressions were such as these—"I have no doubt as to the way of salvation—it lies upon the surface of the Scriptures, and appeals with the force of truth to every heart that is humbled by the conviction of personal guilt. But those who shall receive the benefit of this free salvation, and who shall be 'accounted worthy to stand before the throne,' are those who on earth are meet for heaven, by being truly like Christ: and am I—are the mass of those of whom we are accustomed to think well—are they *like* Christ?"

Entertaining such views, my sister was often distressed with the apprehension that there are indeed "few who shall be saved;" and not being able to class herself among the few whose eminent holiness of temper and of life, and whose abounding labours in the Lord, distinguish them, beyond doubt, as the disciples of Christ, she was long unable to admit the comfort of assured hope.

Whatever may be thought of this state of mind, and of the justness of those views which were the occasion of it, I have, at all events, believed it to be right to mention them.

Jane had, in consequence of peculiar circumstances, become deeply concerned for the orphan family of a

deceased friend. Her anxiety on their behalf prompted her to address them, collectively, in the following letter:—

TO MISS SARAH MEDLAND, AND HER SISTERS AND BROTHERS.

ONGAR, *August 15th*, 1822.

* * * As my time is limited, I cannot devote much of it to subjects of inferior moment, but must address myself at once to that which is all-important, and in which all other advices are included. But in treating this subject there is a peculiar difficulty in addressing those who, like you, are continually reminded of its importance, both by private and public instructions; to whom, therefore, every argument is familiar, and must appear common-place. Nor would I be thought to infer, by any remarks I may make, that your minds are not already impressed, more or less, with the importance of the subject. But from experience I know what need there is of being incessantly quickened and roused afresh; and it sometimes happens that a word from a comparative stranger has more effect than the same thing suggested by a familiar voice.

But now I know not where to begin, nor how to find language to reach the heights and depths of this boundless subject. No language, indeed, can do this; and, therefore, we find in the Scriptures no attempt is made beyond the most plain and simple statements, but which are, on that very account, the more striking.

What, for instance, could the utmost powers of language add in force to that question, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And, my dear friends, there *is* very great danger, notwithstanding all the warnings and admonitions we receive—there is very great danger of losing our souls! It is so easy to pass on from one stage of life to another —from youth to age—with good intentions towards religion, and with a common respectable attention to it, without once coming to the point—without once tasting the happiness of a good hope, or enjoying the supreme satisfaction of making a full surrender of our hearts and lives to God. Multitudes of the professors of religion thus live and thus die; making their comfort and prosperity in this life their chief object of pursuit, and paying only so much attention to religion as they deem *absolutely necessary* to escape eternal destruction. But this is not Christianity, such as the Scriptures describe it; and it is surprising that, with the Bible in their hands, any person can make so great a mistake about it. If God has not our *hearts*, we are not His: He will accept nothing less. If our affections are not in heaven, we shall never reach it. I remember that, during my youth, I was for many years greatly discouraged, and almost in despair at last, on this account; feeling the impossibility of bringing my earthly mind to prefer spiritual things—to love God better than the world. At length, in a letter from a pious friend,

I was reminded that this great work, though impossible to me, was easy to Him; and that He had promised to do it for all who ask. From that time my difficulties began to yield. I saw how absurd it was to doubt the promises of God; and that it was in respect to these very difficulties that He says, "Seek and ye shall find:" so that I began to see, with unspeakable joy, that the hardness, reluctance and earthliness of my heart were no real obstacles, provided that I did but apply to Him for a cure. Yes, to cast ourselves entirely on God, to do all for us, in the diligent use of means, is the sure, the only way, to obtain the benefit. But it is surprising what reluctance there is in the mind to do this, and how ready we are to try every other means first; especially we are unwilling to come by a simple act of faith to the Saviour, and to accept from Him a remedy for all the evils of our nature, although there is no other way. How much labour is often lost for want of this. Come to Him, my dear friends, and "He will not cast you out:" He declares He will not. And come as you are. It is Satan's constant artifice to persuade us that we must wait till we are fit to come. And as this faith that believes and lives, however simple, is the gift of God, pray incessantly, importunately, till you receive it.

I am sure you are all convinced already that delay, neglect, or indifference, in religion, is the greatest folly, the deepest cruelty we can practise towards ourselves,

as it respects our interests in the future world. And, indeed, it is so as to this world too. I have seen something more of life than you, and I have lived long enough to see that promise in numerous instances fulfilled, that "they who seek first the kingdom of God" have other things added to them, in a more especial and desirable way than those who make them the primary object. I am firmly convinced that, taking the whole of life together, the most pious and devoted persons—such as made an early and complete surrender of heart and life to God—have most real prosperity and success in this world, as well as infinitely more enjoyment of earthly good. But really this is a point scarcely worth proving, when the interests of a boundless futurity are concerned; yet, as it is one of the chief illusions of "the father of lies" to persuade persons that, in becoming decidedly religious, they must sacrifice the choicest pleasures of life, and that God's ways are not "ways of pleasantness," it is desirable to expose the falsehood. All the real and reasonable enjoyments of life are entirely compatible, not only with an ordinary profession of religion, but with the highest spirituality of mind; and are greatly sweetened by it, if kept in their subordinate place: and as for the rest, the gaiety, the vanity, the evil tempers, the restless desires of a worldly heart, its selfishness and frowardness, and all those indulgences which are forbidden to us, they are as certainly destructive of our true interests and happiness

here, as of our eternal happiness. Of this truth, experience too late convinces the most successful votaries of the world. But let us rise above these lower considerations; the question is, Are we desirous to secure the salvation of our souls? And it is impossible to fix a steady thought on eternity without being so. Then let us take the Bible for our rule, and never rest till we have a Scriptural foundation for our hope; nor till our life, as well as our creed, is conformed to its precepts and examples. Allow me then to mention those means which are most essential to the attainment of this happiness.

To use means is our part; it is a comparatively easy part; and if we will not even do this, it shows that we are not at all in earnest on the subject. I will mention, then, as the first and the last—as that which is indispensable to our making any progress in religion—*daily, constant, private prayer*. I am aware that where this habit has not been formed very early, there may be a sort of awkwardness and false shame felt in the commencement of it in a family; but it is *false shame*, which a little effort will conquer, and a short time entirely remove. I believe you know that it was my intention to have recommended this practice to you, if not already adopted; and now I cannot feel satisfied without doing so; for if ever I was sure that I was giving good advice, I am sure of it in this instance; and I will—I must—most earnestly request your attention to it. Perhaps

some of you might reply that, seldom feeling inclined to prayer, it would generally be a formal and heartless service; but this is the very reason why it must never be neglected. This reluctance to spiritual engagements is what the best of Christians have to combat with, and it can only be overcome by prayer. If, then, you were to wait till you are of yourselves so disposed, depend upon it, you would pass through life and plunge into eternity in a prayerless state; and although you may often engage in private devotion with little feeling, and no apparent benefit, yet there is one certain advantage gained by it, namely, that the habit is strengthened; and as we are creatures of habit, and God has made us so, He requires us to avail ourselves of its important advantages. If there is any one thing more than another among the many privileges of a religious education for which I feel thankful, it is the having been trained, from my early years, to retire, morning and evening, for this purpose. I found that a habit thus early and strongly formed, was not easily broken through, notwithstanding all the vanity of my youthful years; and however much I have to lament the abuse of it, yet, if ever I have known anything of religion, it is to the closet that I must trace it; and I believe that universal experience testifies that our comfort and progress in the divine life are entirely regulated by the punctuality and fervour of our engagements there. There is no need that the exercise should be tedious; a short portion of Scripture read

with thought, and a few simple sentences uttered with the whole heart, are far preferable to a much longer address, in which the same heartless phraseology is continually repeated. But as your desires enlarge, so will your petitions; and the more you are in earnest, the less liable you will be to fall into hackneyed and formal expressions.

There is another practice which, next to prayer and reading the Scriptures, I have found most profitable;—I mean reading once every day, at the time either of morning or evening retirement, a few pages of some pious book—selecting for this purpose, not the light productions of the day, but the writings of the most eminently useful and impressive authors. Christian biography, also, is peculiarly profitable. This custom need not add more than ten minutes to the time of retirement; and it is, I think, one of the very best means for retaining a daily impression of serious things. Habit, also (try it for one month, and see if it is not so), will render this pleasant, even though it should seem irksome at first. If you will excuse my entering into such minute particulars, I will add, that the most advantageous time for the purposes I have recommended is not that of retiring for the night; drowsiness will generally invade us then; besides, few young people can be quite alone at that time, and a prayer said by the bedside, with a companion present, is not—I might almost say, *cannot* be—personal prayer. It is a good—I will call it a blessed custom—for a family to disperse to their respective

places of retirement half an hour before supper. Nor is it, you must be aware, from my own experience alone that I recommend it; for it is a practice which I know to be strictly observed by all my pious friends, and which I have remarked in every serious family in which I ever visited. As to the morning, it is highly desirable that it should take place before breakfast, as afterwards it interferes with other duties, and is in great danger of being quite neglected. Besides, it is as essential to the health of the body, as of the soul, to rise at least early enough for such a purpose. I fear I shall tire you, and will mention but one other thing, and that is, the advantage of a more particular improvement of Sabbath evenings, as the time most suitable for longer retirement and deeper thoughtfulness than the engagements of other days will admit.

My dear friends, be not contented with low aims and small attainments in religion:—they are, indeed, fearful signs of insincerity; or, at best, proceed from a merely slavish fear of the consequences of quite neglecting it. Oh, do aspire to something beyond an ordinary reputable profession of it! *Here* ambition is sanctified. Determine to number yourselves among the happy few; and do not be discouraged by difficulties, nor think it too much for you to attain. It is not humility, but inactivity and despondency, that leads us to think so. God will give us all the grace, and strength, and ability, we really desire and ask for.

And let me affectionately recommend you early to seek to be engaged in some sphere of active usefulness. Doing good is the most excellent means of getting good. There is no mistake greater than to suppose that we are sent into the world only to attend, however industriously, to our own personal, or even family, interests. Love to our neighbour demands our active exertions in his behalf; and we are all required, more or less, "to go and work in the vineyard." We have all a talent entrusted to us; and what shall we say when our Lord comes, if we have not improved it? Did you never remark, in reading Romans xvi., how St. Paul, in his salutations, particularizes those who were most zealously engaged in good works?—"Phœbe, a servant of the church, and a succourer of many;"—"Priscilla and Aquila, his helpers in Christ;"—"Mary, who bestowed much labour on them;"—"Persis, who laboured much in the Lord;"—while he passes over, with a slight remembrance, or notes with censure, others who "minded only their own things, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's." It must have been gratifying to have been thus distinguished by the Apostle; but oh! how much more so to be approved by Him, who for our good requires these services from us; and to hear Him say at last, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" We should suffer no day to pass without thinking of and acting for *that* day when we shall be "judged according to our works," as the only evidences of our faith; and very encouraging is that kind

and considerate expression of our Lord, concerning a poor woman, showing that He is no hard master, and not unreasonable in His requisitions—"She hath done what she could." But how few of us deserve this praise! I am persuaded you would find useful activity one of the best preservatives against the innumerable temptations to which, as youth advances, you will be exposed. How many young persons have blessed God that ever they were led to engage in Sunday-school teaching! It profitably occupies that time which, if wasted in frivolity and indulgence, leads to the worst consequences; and in teaching others, a double blessing often descends upon the teacher.

But in engaging in active usefulness, especially when we are required to associate with others, there are evils to be guarded against; and we must be clad with the impenetrable armour of Christian simplicity and meekness, in order to avoid them. We may have to encounter those who are officious, unreasonable, monopolizing, ambitious, and overbearing; and if any similar tempers are indulged in ourselves, continual contention must ensue. The only way is to rise superior to those petty jealousies and inferior motives; to do good for its own sake alone; to persevere in a quiet, forbearing, yielding line of conduct, which never fails to disappoint and weary out the most troublesome, at last. And even if any should say to us, however unjustly, "Friend, go down lower," our wisdom and happiness is to submit

with a good grace, and cheerfully to labour in a humbler sphere. That temper and conduct which is called "spirited" in asserting our rights, and maintaining our consequence, is as unwise and impolitic as it is unchristian-like. Nothing forms so truly great and dignified a character as "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

But with regard to our conduct, whether at home or abroad, we cannot mistake, if we will but follow the precepts of Scripture, in their plain and literal sense. This is too much neglected, strangely neglected, even by those who profess to make the Bible their rule. If we had no other directions whatever for our conduct than those contained in that beautiful chapter, Romans xii., it would make a heaven of earth, were they but attended to. It is an excellent chapter to read very often, and deeply and daily to study. It would make a little paradise of any society or family where its spirit was imbibed; and after all, it is at home—in the bosom of our families, in our daily and hourly tempers and conduct, that we have the best opportunity of practising holy obedience to the commandments of Christ. Keeping these commandments, which "are not grievous"—though we are prone to think they are, till we try—implies a continual exercise of self-denial; and if we are conscious that we make no such sacrifices—that we are not in the habit of denying ourselves, it is plain that we are not following Him at all; for those who do must bear some cross. There is, indeed, something in the very sound of this

word *self-denial* which alarms our indolence; self-indulgence, pride, and wilfulness are the greatest enemies to our peace and happiness; and one day's experience is enough to show that, in proportion as they are resisted and mortified, we are comfortable, tranquil, and happy.

May God bless you all, and lead every one of you safely through this dangerous world, to His eternal rest! This is the earnest hope, and will be the frequent prayer of your sincere and affectionate friend,

J. T.

To the young lady who, as the eldest of the same orphan family, sustained some responsibility in relation to her sisters and brothers, Miss Taylor writes:—

ONGAR, *June 7th*, 1823.

* * * Do you remember the remark, that the reason why, in the history of our country, the female reigns have been most prosperous, is that women, feeling their own insufficiency to hold the reins of government, have been more ready than kings to depend upon the advice and assistance of wise and able counsellors? Hence it has been said, that in female reigns we have been governed by *men;* while kings have often allowed themselves and their kingdom to be governed by women. Certainly as much wisdom and prudence may be shown in the choice of advisers, as even in determining important affairs ourselves. But above all, my dear friend, your safety and wisdom will be, to "ask

counsel of the Lord;" and that not only in a general way, but with a firm and steady dependence on Him, to do what you ask of Him; and this will not be to order things in any particular way that you feel most anxious for, but to overrule them so as He knows to be best for you. "Commit your way unto the Lord, and He *will* direct your paths;" but I daresay you are already sufficiently acquainted with your own heart to know that it is no easy thing to do this unreservedly. We are prone secretly to dictate to His Providence, instead of feeling an entire resignation to it. I will venture to add one more particular recommendation; and that is, that in the choice of persons to advise you in your future domestic arrangements, you will select those only who, in addition to worldly prudence, are qualified by the *most decided piety* to counsel you.

I remember, several years ago, a very wise, kind, and good man said to me, that as a general rule (though certainly not without exceptions) it will be found, when we have a choice to make in regard to our affairs, that the decision which is least agreeable to our inclinations is most conducive to our ultimate welfare. This remark I have never forgotten; and I have often since proved the justness and utility of it, notwithstanding its apparent severity. I quote it to you with less hesitation, because I know that, in any arrangements in which the pleasures and relaxations of young persons are concerned, I am always disposed to lean to the side of indulgence, to a

degree which I have often been blamed for. This I tell you, that you may not too hastily conclude my opinions in such matters to be stern or rigid. * * *

To the second daughter of this family she addressed several letters, from among which the following is selected :—

TO MISS E. MEDLAND.

ONGAR, *December 19th*, 1823.

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—

It is only the thought of your being too busy to attend to anything but the business in hand, that has prevented my writing before, to welcome you into the new house; or, perhaps, if I had followed the dictates of my own feelings, and consulted yours, I should rather have condoled with you on forsaking the old one. I can guess what feelings have been uppermost with you in every interval of bustle; and though not in fact, yet in thought, I have paced with you through the deserted rooms—sympathising with you in the remembrances they awaken. I am no stranger to local attachments, and I respect them in others, as indications of better feelings. The trees, the walks, the walls, that seem so dear, are chiefly so as they are associated in our minds with those we love, to whom they have been equally familiar. Sorrow in parting with these objects is therefore an amiable regret; and it will be felt in proportion as

home, its inhabitants, and its quiet pursuits, have been loved and enjoyed. Cowper has sanctioned such feelings in addressing his mother's picture :—

> "Where once we lived, our name is heard no more ;
> Children not thine have trod our nursery floor," &c.

But, my dear girl, while I sympathise with your sorrow, and more than that, love you for it, yet you know I would not encourage its unrestrained indulgence. The proper and effectual antidote to every undue and morbid indulgence of regret is to be found in the cheerful performance of the daily recurring duties of life ; which, by the wise appointment of Providence, prevent brooding melancholy, while they do not tend (like the relief sought in amusements and society) to blunt the edge of genuine feeling. * * *

The youngest brother, then at school, she addressed as follows, three months only before her death :—

ONGAR, *January 16th*, 1824.

DEAR JOHN,—

Ever since you first went to K——, I have felt a wish to write to you, but have deferred it to this time, thinking that letters from your friends might be most acceptable during the vacation, on account of the little disappointment you have undergone in not returning home. I was very much pleased to hear how cheerfully you submitted to the decision of your friends respecting

this; the consciousness of which will, I am sure, afford you much more solid satisfaction, than if you could have prevailed on them by childishly pleading to return.

I have also heard, with very great pleasure, the good accounts that have reached your sisters respecting your conduct at school; and hope that you will feel a laudable ambition to *maintain* this good character. We all know that it is an easier thing to set out well while there is the stimulus of novelty to excite us, than steadily to persevere in a good course. Yet I need not remind you that nothing short of such steady perseverance in well-doing, will avail anything to your real advantage; and it is this alone that truly merits praise. You cannot, therefore, guard too carefully against the first small temptations that may present themselves, of whatever kind; if these are yielded to, others more powerful will quickly follow; and thus, for want of a little timely effort, every good resolution may eventually fail. "He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little." You are now old enough, dear John, to reflect seriously; and let me advise you to endeavour to gain some acquaintance with your own disposition, in order to correct what may be amiss; and whatever you discover to be the fault to which you are most liable, and the temptation by which you are most easily overcome, there set a double guard, and resist them as your *worst enemies.*

It has been frequently remarked by those who are engaged in education, that pupils who show most quickness, and make most progress in their studies, are the least worthy of praise in other and *more important* respects. Now, dear John, do not let this be your case; never be content with half a character, but be still more ambitious to distinguish yourself for obedience, gentleness, kindness, and a resolute resistance to all that you know to be wrong, than for any mental attainments, remembering that cleverness, unconnected with goodness, proves a curse, rather than a blessing.

On the other hand, allow me to remind you of the importance of diligently improving your present opportunities for acquiring knowledge. How valuable knowledge is, and how glad you will be of it in future life, you can scarcely at present imagine; and be assured, no time will ever arrive when the business you have now to attend to can better be done, even if it could be done at all. But it has truly been said, that time and opportunities lost in one period of life, can never be recovered in another, because every portion of life is fully occupied with its own proper engagements; so that what is lost through negligence in childhood or youth, is lost irrecoverably. Now the only way to make real proficiency in learning of any kind, is to acquire a love of it for its own sake; and this may always be done by taking pains. Never be contented with merely getting through your daily tasks in order

to escape fines and punishments. No boy of sound sense, and of a strong mind, will need to be governed by such motives: he will find a pleasure in that daily round of business, which, to the sluggish or trifling, is all toil; and those difficulties which discourage and disgust the idle, do but stimulate the diligent to greater efforts.

But, my dear John, let me still more urgently entreat you not to suffer either business or pleasure to divert your mind from what you know is all important. Oh do not indulge that foolish and false idea, that the great concerns of religion may be put off to a future day! Do but try, and you will find that "the fear of the Lord is" indeed "the beginning of wisdom," and that they who seek Him *early*, enjoy His peculiar favour and blessing on all the pursuits and events of life; and you, bereaved as you are of early friends, how much more than you can possibly at present imagine, do you need God to be your Father, and the Guide of your unprotected youth! Study His will, then, by constantly reading the Scriptures, and seek Him for yourself by earnest prayer, and be assured you will not seek in vain. I will not apologize for not writing you an entertaining letter; since it is the desire I feel for your truest good, that induces me to fill it with such plain advice, persuaded that you will not only receive it kindly, but peruse it with attention and serious thought. You have heard how much your sister and

I were disappointed in not being able to visit you while we were at Bedford; the bad weather rendered it quite impossible. Believe me, dear John,

Your affectionate Friend.

I have found a letter dated the day after the above, and it is almost the last written by my sister, who from this time became incapable of maintaining her usual epistolary intercourse with her friends.

TO MISS MARIANNE HORNE.

ONGAR, *January 17th*, 1824.

* * * I rejoice to hear of your continued prosperity; and am not surprised that the pressure of so important a charge should, at times, depress your spirits; nor that even your happiest seasons should be clouded by the distraction of mind consequent upon it; especially while it is yet new to you. There are, doubtless, advantages in a life of leisure which, if duly improved, would tend greatly to heighten the happiness of the Christian life. But, considering what our depraved nature is, there is a strong probability that they will *not* be improved. So that, if I might so speak, I believe the chances are greater of making spiritual progress in a life of activity, or even of bustle, than when the mind is left at leisure to prey upon itself, and indulge its morbid propensities.

I thank you, my dear friend, for planning so pleasant a scheme as that of my visiting you at Manchester. I will not say it can never be; yet I cannot indulge the expectation of my health permitting me to undertake so long a journey. I have been very much indisposed for many weeks past, with a severe attack of rheumatism, which has greatly confined me to the house, and affected my general health. From this, I am thankful to say, I am slowly recovering; but in other respects, I cannot boast of improvement; yet the chastisements with which I am visited are still lighter than my expectations; and how much lighter than my deserts! I am endeavouring, but with small success, "to forget the things that are behind, and to press forward." But oh, how little can affliction in *itself* do to produce spiritual affections! I feel this; and that, without the grace of God to help me, all these rendings from life and earthly happiness will be in vain.

* * * I have lately taken a final leave of Mrs. Wenham, the friend of my happier days: it was but a short interview; but we had time to take a hasty and impressive retrospect of the past;—of life, such as we had each found it; and to compare our early expectations with those circumstances in which we are at present placed. The moral was obvious—"This is not our rest." * * *

CHAPTER XVII.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

THE last two letters have anticipated the course of the Memoir; and to this I now revert. On the occasion of the death of her uncle, the Rev. James Hinton, of Oxford, which occurred in the month of July, Jane was impressed with the belief that death was not to visit the family with a single blow; and this foreboding was not falsified, for, in the following November, another uncle, Mr. Charles Taylor (the editor of Calmet), was removed; and in a few months more, her own death took place.

With the hope of at least recruiting her spirits, my sister, accompanied by her brother and a young friend, visited Margate once again; where she passed the month of October tranquilly and pleasantly: on her return she went to Bedford, and availed herself of the opportunity to visit Olney and Weston; the feelings of the moment she has expressed in the lines written on visiting Cowper's garden. Her return from Bedford took place at the time of an extraordinary inundation;

and she was exposed, with the young friend who accompanied her, to considerable peril in the journey.

At this time she was so far exempt from suffering, or any positive inconvenience from the disease that was preying upon her constitution, and her ordinary comfort was so little impaired, that she took her part in the common engagements of life, with scarcely any apparent diminution of her wonted activity and animation. In these respects, she was indeed remarkably favoured by the goodness of God; for, to the last, her sufferings were only those consequent upon extreme debility. The local disease insensibly prevailed over the strength of her constitution, with little external show of its progress, and with scarcely any positive pain. This exemption from suffering was noted by herself and her family, as calling for lively gratitude.

The event might probably have been somewhat different, had not new symptoms been induced by accidental exposure to cold. On the 21st of November, my sister went to London to take leave of one of her most intimate friends, who was then preparing to leave England. This interview, it was known by both parties, must terminate an intercourse of long standing, and of unusual tenderness and confidence: the meeting was therefore protracted as long as possible, so as to allow my sister to return to Ongar the same day. Being unable to procure a coach, she and her friend took boat at Lambeth, late in the afternoon, and proceeded

as far as London Bridge, through a chilly rain. This exposure produced general pains, which from that time continued to be the principal cause of her suffering, and, apparently, of the rapid decay of her strength.

Notwithstanding her extreme weakness, she still continued to attend public worship; and even to teach her class in the Sunday-school. The last time of her doing so was on the 4th of January. She went to the chapel accompanied by a friend, whom, after teaching the children the usual time, she took to a window overlooking the burial-ground; and, pointing to a spot opposite, said,—"There, Betsy, that is where my grave is to be." The same afternoon, a funeral sermon was preached, on the occasion of the death of a highly-esteemed friend—the mother of a large family, whose death had very deeply affected her. She looked at the weeping family, and deliberately realized the scene, soon, as she believed, to be repeated in the same place, when her own family should be the mourners.

Either by the too great excitement of her feelings on this occasion; or by her exposure to the weather, her symptoms seemed to be aggravated from this time:—her breathing became so quick and feeble, as to keep her spirits in constant agitation, and almost to prevent her joining in conversation. She still took her place in the family circle, though it had now become necessary that she should be carried from her chamber to the sitting-room.

Partly from the impulse of that restlessness which often attends a last illness, and with the hope of deriving at least some alleviation from medical advice, she determined, in the month of February, upon spending a week with some friends in London, whose affection towards her gave her the assurance that she should find all the comforts of home in their house. Though extremely distressed by the exertion of being placed in the chaise, the journey seemed greatly to revive her;—she in some measure enjoyed the society of her friends, and returned home in amended health. She describes her feelings about this time, in the following letter to her sister:—

ONGAR, *March 24th*, 1824.

* * * I hope the pleasant excursion to Nottingham will do you both good. Give my kind love to C—— and S——, of whom I often think; but I now refrain from writing to any one unless it is absolutely necessary. I feel much obliged by Mr. ——'s kind remembrance of me: as to writing three verses, or one, for his album, it has been, and is, quite impossible.

You heard from mother that I went to town for advice. I was most kindly nursed there for a week, and returned much better; nor have I since had a return of that tremendous heaving of my breath, which I can compare only to an inward tempest. This laborious breathing, however, though relieved, has never subsided

entirely since I first felt it, which was from the commencement of the rheumatic attack. The weather for some weeks past has been very unfavourable to me. I think there is still a hope that my strength and appetite may be restored, at least to what they were, when I am able to take the air, and perhaps to change it. But I more often think that a gradual decline has commenced; and if you were to see how much I am reduced, you would not wonder at my forming such an opinion. My bones indeed "look and stare upon me;" my strength, too, fails me, so that I cannot walk more than once or twice across the room at a time, and whenever I do, I feel as if all within me were hanging in heavy rags. Whenever the weather permits, I am drawn round the garden, which is a great refreshment.

I need not tell you how kindly I am nursed, and how tenderly all is done that can be done for my relief and comfort. I have also to be thankful for being so free from pain: my suffering now is almost entirely from debility, and weariness, and difficulty of breathing; but what I am most of all thankful for, is that the prospect of death is less formidable to me, owing to my having more "peace in believing;" and an increase of this is all I want in order to reconcile me to it entirely. I often think, too, that if I am taken off by a gradual decay I ought to rejoice, as being thereby rescued probably from far greater suffering; but I desire to leave it all with God.

I hope you do not forget that this summer is your time for coming to Ongar. For a long time I have been looking forward to it as affording a hope of our meeting once more, which I am sure we should both wish. We do not like the thought of Mr. Gilbert's coming so far south without our seeing him: could you not both come on from Nottingham? Though, unless I should become rapidly worse, it would be better for you to come when the season is more advanced. Dear Ann and Mr. Gilbert, remember me in your prayers, as I am sure you do.

Your affectionate Sister,

JANE.

Referring to this time, her mother writes:—

"What a winter was the ensuing! Her disease baffled every means that we had recourse to. On the 13th of February she went again to London for further medical advice, and we were allowed to hope that she might be nursed on for several years. This hope we were naturally disposed to cherish, when after a week's absence she returned, apparently improved; but these flattering symptoms were of short duration: her breathing became increasingly laborious, as was supposed from the cancerous disease having affected the diaphragm; otherwise she suffered from the affected part less pain than is usually felt under this disease.

"On the Saturday previous to her death the physician visited her, and now finally extinguished our hopes, and

at the same time hinted that her dissolution was very near: this, as we had not expected it so soon, was a severe shock. She evidently discovered by our countenances the state of the case, but forbore to ask any questions. She was not confined to her bed a single day, but was brought down in the arms of her brother Isaac and placed on the sofa."

Neither Jane herself nor her family fully apprehended the now near approach of death; some degree of delusion is very frequent in such cases, and in this the flatteries of hope were strengthened by that calmness and fortitude, and reluctance to receive any assistance she could possibly dispense with, which in great measure concealed the progress of her decline; and also by the undiminished vigour of her mind, and the unabated interest she took in everything with which she was wont to be concerned.

Though she had at this time become incapable of long-continued religious exercises, yet, to the last day of her life, the stated times of retirement were observed by her. Usually in the evening, by her request, her brother read to her some portion of Scripture, and a few pages of Bennett's "Christian Oratory," a book she highly valued. On these occasions her conversation, though not elevated by the language of unclouded hope, frequently contained the expression of a humble and growing trust in the power and grace of the Saviour.

Happily for herself, my sister's imagination, which throughout her life had been too much alive to ideas of terror, seemed in a great degree quelled by the languor of disease. Thus her mind was relieved from those unreal fears which otherwise might have possessed her thoughts in the near prospect of death. Still, occasionally, she seemed to be contending with what she acknowledged to be terrors of the imagination only. "Oh!" she would say, "the grave!—the grave is dark and cold. But surely, even to the wicked, there is no suffering in the *grave.*" For some time she seemed much distressed by an apprehension that her remains might be disturbed after burial; but from this fear she was relieved by an explicit promise that such precautions should be taken as should render such disturbance impossible. For the most part, however, the higher and the real interests of the future life occupied their proper place in her thoughts; and whatever other anxieties might harass her for a moment, she quickly returned to this sentiment,—

> "If sin be pardon'd, I'm secure:
> Death has no sting besides."

For months past she had been wishing to transcribe her will, with a view of amending it in some particulars, but had deferred doing so in the hope of a return of strength, which might make her more equal to the task; but feeling now her powers of body rapidly declining,

she roused herself by an extraordinary effort, and in a way quite characteristic of herself; for it was always some endeavour to promote the comfort or interests of those she loved that called forth the vigour of her mind. She was therefore supported (April 5th) at her desk, and continued writing with evidently a very painful effort for more than an hour: she completed her task in the three or four following days. I may just take the occasion to say that in the disposal of her affairs she was guided by the most exact impartiality, acting consistently with the principle she had often warmly professed, and which is so rarely regarded—that there can be no more right to do wrong (by indulging capricious preferences) in making a will than in any other transaction of life.

Though the least exertion had now become distressingly painful, her mind was so perfectly collected that the transcript of her will was made without errors, and the parts in which it differed from the original were expressed with her wonted perspicuity: she also, the same afternoon in which she completed her task, entered some payments in her accounts, as well as the daily memorandums in her pocket-book, which are completed to the Thursday before her death.

On Saturday she was visited by the medical man whom she had consulted when last in London. She was then, though actually dying, so little aware of the near approach of death that she asked his opinion of

the practicability of her leaving home for change of air. After he left her, however, recollecting his expressions and manner of replying to her inquiries, she inferred the truth, and on Sunday plainly indicated to her family that she did so.

Her last Sunday was passed tranquilly: several times in the course of it she exerted her utmost strength to converse with her mother, into whose mind she endeavoured to pour that consolation which she knew would be much needed. In the evening she conversed separately with her father and brother; and to them, as before to her mother, she professed her settled hope of heaven. To the latter she said, "I am now quite happy, as happy as my poor frame will bear."

On Monday she came down stairs at the usual hour, and was calm in spirit, seeming distressed only by increased debility. During the morning she conversed for some time with her brother, who received her dying wishes and injunctions, and an emphatic expression of affection, which will ever sound fresh in his recollection as if heard but yesterday. In the afternoon she resolved to make a last effort to finish a letter to her young friends in London. For this purpose her brother supported her in his arms, for she was now utterly unable to sustain herself; her affectionate earnestness to express to them her deep concern for their highest interests cost her an effort that seemed as if it must have hastened her dissolution. It is as follows:—

ONGAR, *April 11th*, 1824.

My VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

I must no longer wait till I am more able to write, as every day I become weaker; though I know it will give you pain, yet I must tell you that I should not be surprised if these few lines are the last I shall ever be able to send you. I am very ill; Mr. —— came yesterday to see me, and I assure you he thinks me so. It is possible, he thinks, that a change in the weather may revive me; but I am now so weak that I think there is as much to fear as to hope from the warm weather. However, that I leave; I will take care that you shall be informed as often as needful how I go on to the last, and I shall hope to hear from you, for though I cannot write I can read a letter. I thank dear Elizabeth for her last. I am now indeed too ill to accept your kind invitation.

Monday.

I fear I cannot finish. Oh, my dear friends, if you knew what thoughts I have now, you would see as I do, that the whole business of life is preparation for death! Let it be so with you. If I have ever written or spoken anything you deem good advice, be assured I would, if I could, repeat it now with tenfold force. Think of this when I am gone. Tell James I hope he will read "Williams's Diary," and study to become such a character as a man of business and a Christian. I wish you all to read it. My love and best wishes to John.

May God bless you all. Farewell! farewell! dear S., dear E., dear P., dear J.; farewell. Yours till death, and after that, I hope,

JANE TAYLOR.

In the evening a minister called, with whom she conversed a short time in a tone of cheerful and confirmed faith. Afterwards with her mother, in terms of intermingled affection, consolation, and hope.

When carried upstairs on Monday night, she for the first time allowed her sister to do everything for her. She passed the night quietly; but in the morning felt herself unable to rise as usual. About ten o'clock her brother read a psalm and prayed with her. Soon afterwards she was placed in an easy chair by the bedside. About the same time one of her brothers arrived from London; to him she spoke with the most emphatic earnestness, professing very distinctly the ground of her own hope, and the deep sense she then had of the reality and importance of eternal things. Her voice was now deep and hollow, her eyes glazed, and the dews of death were on her features; but her recollection was perfect, and her soul full of feeling. While thus sitting up, and surrounded by her family, in a loud but interrupted voice, she said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Soon after she repeated with the same emphasis the verse,—

"Jesus, to Thy dear faithful hand
My naked soul I trust;
And my flesh waits for Thy command
To drop into the dust."

Repeating with intense fervour the words,—

"Jesus, to Thee my naked soul—
My naked soul I trust."

Being then placed in bed, all withdrew but her sister, with whom she conversed for some time, giving her several particular directions with great clearness. She then requested that everything in the room might be put in the most exact order; after this she lay tranquilly an hour or two, seeming to suffer only from the laborious heaving of the chest; and in reply to a question to that effect, said she was "quite comfortable."

In the afternoon she observed her brother to be writing a letter; she inquired to whom: being told it was to Mrs. Gilbert, who was then on her way to Ongar, she gave her opinion as to the best way of insuring her sister's meeting the letter, so as, if possible, to hasten her arrival. She had just before said, "Well, I don't think I shall see Ann again; I feel I am dying fast."

From this time she did not again speak so as to be understood; but seemed sensible till about five o'clock, when a change took place: her breathing became interrupted, still she was tranquil, and her features

perfectly placid. At half-past five she underwent a momentary struggle, and ceased to breathe.

Her mother says :—

"It was my sad office to close her eyes, an office which, according to the course of nature, should have been reversed, yet if I know myself, the acute feeling I manifested on that occasion was not unaccompanied by humble submission to the Divine will.

"Thus have I conducted the reader to her dying bed, who from such a tranquil scene will be disposed to say, 'Let my death be the death of the righteous; let my latter end be like theirs.'"

The interment took place in the burial-ground of the chapel at Ongar, where a simple monument has been erected to mark the spot.

No likeness of my sister exists which would be thought satisfactory by those who knew her. In truth, the expression of her face was of that kind which is the most difficult to be seized by the pencil, for it was the expression of the finest feelings habitually veiled from observation. Her features were delicately formed and regular; her stature below the middle size; every movement bespoke the activity of her mind, and a peculiar archness and sprightliness of manner gave significance to all she did.

But the truest image of the writer's character will be found in her letters, which were ever the genuine ex-

pression of her feelings. Not one of the many of which I have had the perusal, betrays any attempt to write "a clever letter:" she corresponded with none but *friends*, and the intercourse with those she loved was inspired only by warm and generous affection. This may, indeed, be named as the prominent feature of her character, for to love and to be loved was the happiness she sought.

Once and again in these letters there are acknowledgments of the constitutional irritability of her temper. This irritability was, however, more often excited by concern for the interests of those whom she loved than by any other cause—I may say *never* by the thwarting of mere selfish wishes. Her abhorrence of every kind of pretension, of fraud, and of injustice, was indeed strong; and this feeling, added to her piercing discernment of the secret motives of those with whom she had to do, often occasioned her much fruitless uneasiness, and might sometimes give to her manner an air of constraint; for, to seem to accept as genuine either actions or words which she suspected to be spurious, required a degree of self-command of which she was hardly capable.

In her letters my sister frequently complains of the languor and inertness of her mind; but these expressions, without explanation, would convey a false idea to the reader. It is indeed true that the delicacy of her constitution, especially after it was impaired by literary labour and by sickness, rendered her liable to much

languor; but her disposition and her habits were active and diligent. In whatever she undertook she was assiduous, persevering, and exact; and all her exertions were directed by a regard to usefulness. She was fond of the labours of the needle, as also of every domestic engagement. Indeed, so strong were her tastes of this kind, so completely feminine was her character, and so free was she from that ambition which often accompanies intellectual superiority, that had she early in life been placed in a sphere of home duties, her talents would probably never have been elicited.

The combination of humour and pensiveness belonged in a peculiar degree to my sister's mind, and gave a grace and an interest to the productions of her pen. Without this union and counteraction, humour is apt to become broad and offensive, and pensiveness to sink into sentimentality or dulness. But where it exists, even when both do not actually appear, the one will operate by a latent influence to give point and vividness to the most sombre sentiment, while the other serves at once to enrich and to chasten the sportiveness of fancy. To these qualities of my sister's mind were added a fine sense of the beautiful and sublime in nature, and a nice perception of the characteristic points of every object she observed.

In spontaneous conversation, especially on some matters of opinion, she might seem much influenced by peculiar predilections; but whenever she felt her-

self responsible for the opinion she gave, and especially when she wrote for the press, her judgment was acute and sound, and happily directed by intuitive good sense. Of this excellence, I think her correspondence with her friends, and the papers contributed to the *Youths' Magazine*, will furnish frequent and striking instances.

Her poetical remains exhibit a considerable versatility of talent. My sister first wrote simply to express the overflowing emotions of her heart: these pieces breathe tenderness; and relieved as they are by an elegant playfulness, give the truest image of the writer's mind. It was under the guidance of a peculiarly nice ear for the language of nature that she accommodated these talents to the difficult task of writing verse for children. Her compositions of this kind are for the most part distinguished by a perfect simplicity and transparency of diction; by brief, exact, and lively descriptions of scenery, by frequent touches both of humour and of pathos, and by a pervading purity and correctness of moral principle.

But her earlier compositions gave little promise of that energy of thought, elevation of sentiment, and force of diction which appear in the "Essays in Rhyme." This long-latent vigour was, however, soon quelled by the languor of sickness: had it been sustained a few years, she would probably have attempted some projects with which her mind was teeming at the time when she found it necessary to abstain from literary occupations. Yet perhaps her delicate frame, even if it had not been

shaken by disease, would not have sustained the effort necessary to give expression to the thoughts with which her imagination laboured.

But whether or not there may be reason to suppose that, under more favourable circumstances, she might as a writer have moved in a higher sphere, it is enough to know that her talent was most beneficially occupied. For, setting aside those of her works which display the most genius, she has in an unpretending walk of literature widely scattered the seeds of virtue and piety. Nor can it be doubted that the good fruits of her labours shall endure and increase long after those who now cherish a fond remembrance of her virtues in private life shall have passed away.

END OF VOL. I.

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